

# **SOUTH COUNTY COMMUTER RAIL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**



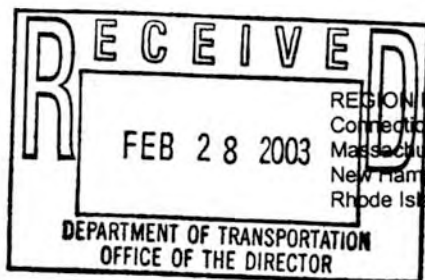
**February, 2003**

**RHODE ISLAND  
DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FEDERAL  
TRANSIT  
ADMINISTRATION**



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Transit  
Administration**



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Mr. James Capaldi  
Director  
Department of Transportation  
Office of the Director  
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Providence, R.I. 02903-1124

FEB 6 2003

**Re: South County Commuter Rail Project Environmental Assessment  
Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**

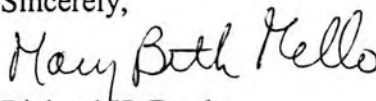
Dear Mr. Capaldi:

Based upon a review of the environmental documentation, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the South County Commuter Rail project. The proposed project includes the following: extend commuter rail service approximately 20 miles along the Northeast Corridor beginning in Providence, RI, south to the Warwick Intermodal Station at T.F. Green Airport, and terminating at Wickford Junction. The construction elements include a new station at Wickford Junction, station consisting of a full high platform, 1,000 car parking garage, track siding and mainline interlocking.

Please be advised that in accordance with 23 CFR 771.121, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is required to transmit a copy of this FONSI to all affected Federal, state and local governmental entities. In addition, under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the FTA has determined that this project will have no effect on historic or archaeological resources.

Please let me know if you have any questions. The FTA looks forward to continuing to work with the RIDOT on this important transit improvement.

Sincerely,

  
Richard H. Doyle  
Regional Administrator

Attachment

**FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION  
REGION 1**

**Finding of No Significant Impact**

**Project: South County Commuter Rail Extension**

**Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Transportation**

**Project Location: Northeast Corridor – Providence to North Kingstown/Wickford Junction**

**Purpose and Need**

The purpose of this transit improvement is to assist Rhode Island to meet its current and future needs, to enhance the state transportation system, improve air quality, link transportation with land use and support economic development initiatives. More specifically, the goals of this transit improvement is to accomplish the following:

- Reduce congestion, improve safety and provide intermodal connections in the I-95 and Route 1/Route 4 corridors by reducing single occupant vehicle trips and improving travel times in the corridors.
- Provide needed intermodal connections to T.F. Green Airport via RIDOT's Warwick Intermodal Station.
- Support RIDOT's ongoing commitment to maintain the existing highway and rail infrastructure as part of its "fix it first" agenda by adding capacity to the existing system without necessitating additional roadway capacity.
- Support the state's goal (as stated in the *Transportation 2020 Ground Transportation Plan 2001 Update*) of using transportation to attain regional economic development goals by providing connections and offering opportunities to attract new commercial development, including redevelopment in the Warwick Station Redevelopment District at T.F. Green Airport.

**Alternatives Considered**

*The Rhode Island Department of Transportation Rail Corridor Study*, November 1994, (incorporated herein by reference) examined public transportation alternatives on the Amtrak Shore Line/Northeast Corridor. Appropriate alternatives were defined in each corridor using three types of public transportation alternatives – light rail transit, commuter rail and busway. Only one transit technology was determined to be appropriate in this corridor – commuter rail. Neither light rail nor a busway would be appropriate since neither could coexist on tracks that carry freight service and high-speed Amtrak passenger service. Also, constructing either light rail or a busway would require the construction of a separate facility parallel to the existing tracks, a prohibitively expensive undertaking for passenger service alone.

In addition to transportation alternatives, this study also examined potential station locations.

### **Proposed Project**

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation is proposing extend commuter rail service along the Northeast Corridor from Providence to North Kingstown with new stations at Warwick and Wickford Junction. The proposed project includes a new station at Wickford Junction consisting of an 800 foot high-level platform with canopies, an 800-foot siding, a new 1,000 car three-story parking garage and mainline interlocking. At this time it is anticipated that service will be provided by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority under the Pilgrim Partnership Agreement. Project components include:

- **Commuter Rail Service Extension** – Continuing eight round-trip commuter rail trains daily (Monday through Friday) south to the Warwick Intermodal Station at T.F. Green Airport and Wickford Junction will augment existing Providence to Boston commuter service. Although the Northeast Corridor is currently used for Amtrak and freight operations, extension of commuter rail service twenty miles south from Providence to Wickford Junction represents a new service opportunity within this corridor.
- **Warwick Intermodal Station** - The Wickford Intermodal Station at T.F. Green Airport will be operational in 2004 serving both MBTA commuter rail service to Boston and Amtrak Acela regional service. Station and rental car garage design is underway. No additional track or signal changes are required for operation of this station. These station improvements are being undertaken through a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) project that was subject to an environmental assessment. The FHWA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact on July 6, 1999. On March 27, 2001 and February 1, 2002 RIDOT submitted environmental re-evaluations to FHWA for project change from a surface parking lot with a stand-alone station to a multi-level parking garage, station and consolidated rental car facility. FHWA accepted the findings that additional environmental impacts could be mitigated with the actions described in the re-evaluations.
- **Wickford Station and Track Improvements** - The preferred site is an undeveloped section of Wickford Junction Plaza, located in the north quadrant of the intersection of Route 102 and Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. Proposed trackside improvements include partial canopies and a high-level platform to provide access in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Parking for 1,000 cars will be provided to meet the parking demand determined in previous studies. A new sidetrack and interlocking are required at the Wickford Junction Station location to provide turn-back capabilities to Providence.

### **Agency Coordination and Public Opportunity to Comment**

- On January 15, 2002, RIDOT held an agency scoping and coordination meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the regulatory and other planning agencies a briefing on the project, and to solicit comments that need to be addressed in the EA.
- On August 3, 2002, the environmental assessment was circulated for 30-day public comment period and a Notice of Availability was published in the Providence Journal.
- Four comment letters were received: Town of North Kingstown, RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, the RI Department of Administration Statewide Planning Program, and Wickford Junction Associates, LLC. RIDOT has provided adequate responses to these comment letters.

## **Determinations and Findings**

### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Finding**

FTA served as lead agency under NEPA for the project. RIDOT, prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in compliance with NEPA, 42 U.S.C. Section 4321 et.seq., and with FTA's regulations, 23 CFR Part 771. The EA analyzes and describes the project's potential significant impacts.

After carefully considering the EA, its supporting documents, and the public comments and responses, **FTA finds under 23 CFR 771.121 that the proposed project, with the mitigation to which RIDOT has committed, will have no significant adverse impacts on the environment.** The record provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an EIS is not required.

#### Noise Findings

Potential noise impacts from the project were assessed using FTA noise assessment criteria following FTA's Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (1995). Noise modeling demonstrated that residents of two adjacent homes could be adversely affected by noise from the proposed parking facility during the peak commuting hours. An existing natural berm in this area, in addition to further landscaping enhancements, will provide limited screening from noise generated on the ground level of the structure. In addition, approximately 100 feet of the northwesterly face of the garage will be enclosed to mitigate noises that may be generated from the upper levels of the parking facility, resulting in no net increase in the ambient noise levels.

#### Water Quality Impacts

The proposed Wickford Junction Station is located above the Hunt, Annaquatucket, and Pettaquamsett sole source aquifers with groundwater classified as GAA by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). The existing storm water management system proposed for this project will be a closed system connected to the system constructed and in place for the Wickford Junction Plaza. The expansion of the existing storm water management system will be subject to the review and approval of RIDEM and the Town of North Kingstown.

Also, in accordance with the Safe Water Drinking Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) needs to review and approve this federally funded project given its proximity to a sole source aquifer. This project may not proceed into construction prior to the receipt of EPA's approval.

#### Land Use and Secondary Growth Impacts

The environmental assessment recognizes that there is a potential for secondary growth impacts as a result of the new train station at Wickford Junction. The majority of the project elements conform to the existing Town of North Kingstown policies and zoning and are compatible with surrounding land uses. Although the specific impacts are uncertain, RIDOT has given assurances that it is committed to assisting all state and local agencies that have the appropriate expertise and jurisdiction in establishing effective land use and zoning policies and regulations.

#### Section 106 Compliance

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, requires the review of federally assisted projects for impacts to districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects listed in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places. Federal agencies must coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and potentially affected Tribes to make this determination. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) has established procedures for the protection of historic and cultural properties in, or eligible for, the National Register (36 CFR Part 800).

On August 23, 2002, the Rhode Island Historical and Heritage Commission determined that any resource that may have existed on the site (Wickford Junction) has already been destroyed and that no archaeological sites remain in the project area.

Based on the cultural resources analysis and coordination with the SHPO, FTA finds that the project will have no effect on any identified or likely cultural or historic resources, and that the Section 106 coordination and consultation requirements for this project have been fulfilled.

#### Section 4(f) Findings

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, codified at 49 U.S.C. 303, declares a national policy that a special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside, public park and recreational lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites. The Secretary of Transportation may not approve transportation projects that adversely affect such resources unless a determination is made that there is no feasible and prudent alternative, and that all possible planning has been done to minimize harm (23 CFR 771.135).

FTA finds that the proposed project will not use or significantly impact any resources protected by Section 4(f) of the DOT Act of 1966.

#### Permits

RIDOT will be required to obtain all necessary permits and approvals prior to the construction of this project.

Approved: Harry Beth Mello Date: 2/6/03  
for Richard H. Doyle  
Regional Administrator

Concur: Margaret E. Foley Date: 2-6-03  
Margaret E. Foley  
Regional Council

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>  | <b>i</b>  |
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....</b>  | <b>ii</b> |
| <b>SECTION 1 – PURPOSE AND NEED .....</b>                            | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.1 Introduction .....   | 1         |
| 1.2 Previous Studies .....   | 1         |
| 1.3 Purpose and Need.....  | 4         |
| 1.4 Consistency with State and Local Plans.....                      | 6         |
| 1.5 Agency Coordination and Public Involvement .....                 | 6         |
| <b>SECTION 2 - PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.....</b>                        | <b>8</b>  |
| 2.1 Preferred Alternative .....                                      | 8         |
| 2.2 Rail Service .....   | 11        |
| 2.3 Ridership .....  | 11        |
| <b>SECTION 3 - POTENTIAL IMPACT.....</b>                             | <b>12</b> |
| 3.1 Land Use and Secondary Growth Impacts .....                      | 13        |
| 3.2 Park and Recreation Area Impacts .....                           | 17        |
| 3.3 Farmland Impacts.....  | 18        |
| 3.4 Social Impacts/Environmental Justice.....                        | 18        |
| 3.5 Relocation Impacts.....  | 19        |
| 3.6 Economic Impacts and Joint Development .....                     | 19        |
| 3.7 Pedestrian and Bicycle Movement and Bus Access .....             | 19        |
| 3.8 Air Quality Impacts.....   | 20        |
| 3.9 Noise and Vibration Impacts .....                                | 22        |
| 3.10 Traffic Impacts .....   | 24        |
| 3.11 Water Quality Impacts .....                                     | 26        |
| 3.12 Permits.....  | 26        |
| 3.13 Wetlands Impacts .....  | 27        |
| 3.14 Water Body Modification and Wildlife Impacts .....              | 27        |
| 3.15 Floodplain .....  | 29        |
| 3.16 Wild and Scenic Rivers .....                                    | 29        |
| 3.17 Coastal Zone Impacts .....                                      | 29        |
| 3.18 Threatened and Endangered Species .....                         | 29        |
| 3.19 Historic and Archaeological Preservation .....                  | 29        |
| 3.20 Hazardous Waste Sites .....                                     | 29        |
| 3.21 Visual Impacts.....   | 30        |
| 3.22 Energy .....  | 30        |
| 3.23 Construction Impacts.....                                       | 30        |
| 3.24 ADA Access and Public Safety .....                              | 30        |
| <b>SECTION 4 - DISTRIBUTION LIST.....</b>                            | <b>32</b> |
| <b>SECTION 5 - APPENDICES.....</b>                                   | <b>32</b> |
| Appendix A - Documents.....  | 32        |
| Appendix B - Correspondence .....                                    | 32        |
| Appendix C – Summary of Environmental Impacts of NEPA Projects ..... | 41        |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rhode Island recognizes the potential for commuter rail service to reduce congestion and improve mobility and has taken steps in recent years to extend commuter rail service from Boston south of Providence to Warwick and Wickford Junction, Rhode Island through the South County Commuter Rail (SCCR) project. The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is now seeking approval of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for New Starts funding for extension of commuter rail service along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor (NEC) from Providence to the South County area. In anticipation of extended service, the state has initiated final design of the commuter rail station in Warwick, conducted an environmental evaluation at Wickford Junction, and has included this project in the proposed FY 2003 – 2004 TIP.

RIDOT's July 2001 *South County Commuter Rail Service Operations Plan Executive Summary*<sup>1</sup> recommends the extension of commuter rail service twenty miles south from Providence to Wickford Junction, currently provided by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). Extension of service to Wickford Junction represents the minimal operating segment (MOS) of future Providence to Westerly service. Completion of this Environmental Assessment (EA) is intended to be the first step in an incremental approach to extending commuter rail service to South County. Preliminary and final design and construction at Wickford Junction Station, in addition to the procurement of commuter rail equipment, will be necessary for the startup of service.

In 1988, RIDOT reinstituted commuter rail service between Providence and Boston through the Pilgrim Partnership Agreement with the MBTA. In 1995, the Pilgrim Partnership II Agreement extended the term of the agreement for an additional ten years and added service between the two cities. More recently RIDOT and the MBTA have agreed to a five year extension through 2009.

Several National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental studies conducted in the recent years addressed use of the Northeast Corridor (NEC) in Rhode Island. These studies were scoped to include environmental issues associated with commuter rail use as a means to expediting the environmental process for this New Starts project. The following documents were prepared for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and are available for review at RIDOT Intermodal Planning Divisions Office:

- Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report Northeast Corridor Improvement Project Electrification (NECIP) – New Haven, CT to Boston, MA. FRA Record of Decision, May 1995
- Rhode Island Freight Rail Improvement Project (FRIP) – Final Environmental Impact Statement. FRA and FHWA Record of Decision, May 1998
- Warwick Station Environmental Assessment. FHWA Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), July 1999

### Purpose and Need

The purpose of the South County Commuter Rail Project is to help Rhode Island meet its current and future needs to enhance the state transportation system, improve air quality, link transportation with land use and support economic development initiatives. More specifically, this project will accomplish the following:

- Reduce congestion, improve safety and provide intermodal connections in the I-95 and Route 1/Route 4 corridors by reducing single occupant vehicle (SOV) trips and improving travel times on both corridors.
- Provide needed intermodal connections to T.F. Green Airport via RIDOT's Warwick Intermodal Station.

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<sup>1</sup> South County Commuter Rail Service, *Providence to Westerly Operations Plan Executive Summary*, prepared by Edwards and Kelcey for the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, July 2001.

- Support RIDOT's ongoing commitment to maintain the existing highway and rail infrastructure as part of its "fix it first" agenda by adding capacity to the existing transportation system without necessitating additional roadway expansion.
- Support the state's goal (as stated in the *Transportation 2020 Ground Transportation Plan 2001 Update*) of using transportation to attain regional economic development goals by providing connections to employment opportunities and offering opportunities to attract new commercial development, including redevelopment in the Warwick Station Redevelopment District at T.F. Green Airport.

### Preferred Alternative

The proposed South County Commuter Rail project includes extension of commuter rail along the NEC from Providence (Mile Post 185.1) to North Kingstown (MP 165.8) with new stations at Warwick (MP 176.6) and Wickford Junction (MP 165.8). At this time it is anticipated that service will be provided by the MBTA under the Pilgrim Partnership II Agreement. Project components include:

- **Commuter Rail Service Extension** Continuing eight round-trip commuter rail trains daily (Monday through Friday) south to the Warwick Intermodal Station at T. F. Green Airport and Wickford Junction will augment existing Providence to Boston commuter service. Although the NEC is currently used for Amtrak and freight operations, extension of commuter rail service twenty miles south from Providence to Wickford Junction represents a new service opportunity within this corridor. During discussions on the Northeast Corridor rail service, Amtrak had proposed extending the commuter service to Kingston Station. After review it was determined that further study will be required to investigate local parking and traffic impacts at Kingston Station along with associated costs. If necessary, service to Kingston would be covered in a future environmental submission.
- **Warwick Intermodal Station** The Warwick Intermodal Station at T.F. Green Airport will be operational in 2004, serving both MBTA commuter rail service to Boston and Amtrak Acela Regional Service. Station and rental car garage design is currently underway. No additional track or signal changes are required for operation of this station.
- **Wickford Junction Station and Track Improvements** The preferred site is in an undeveloped section of Wickford Junction Plaza, located in the north quadrant of the intersection of Route 102 and Amtrak's NEC. Proposed trackside facilities at Wickford Junction Station include partial canopies and a high level platform to provide access in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act. Parking for 1000 cars (including both structured and surface lots) will be provided to meet the parking demand determined in previous studies. A new side track and interlocking are required at the Wickford Junction Station location to provide turnback to Providence.

The selection of the Wickford Junction Station site has the support of the North Kingstown Town Council, Town Officials, Wickford Junction Plaza developer, and the commuting public present at a RIDOT public workshop held on September 17, 1998 at North Kingstown High School. Station operation represents an opportunity to create a public/private partnership with the Wickford Junction Plaza developer. Wickford Junction Station is a critical component in the South County Commuter Rail plan, providing 58 percent of the total projected commuter rail ridership between Providence and Westerly. The proposed station, located a half mile from Route 4, a major arterial connecting Route 1 with the Providence-Warwick metropolitan area, will provide access to an attractive rail alternative in this corridor.

### Potential Impact

Environmental consequences of construction and operation of the South County Commuter Rail service are presented for those actions not previously assessed in prior NEPA documents for Warwick Station and the NEC.

Therefore, analysis of potential impacts has focused on the construction of Wickford Junction Station with limited track improvements. Table ES-1 summarizes environmental impacts for South County Commuter Rail improvements. As indicated, no significant impact is anticipated from operation of commuter rail service between Providence and Wickford Junction, including stations at Warwick and Wickford Junction.

**TABLE ES-1****Summary of Environmental Impacts**

| <b>Environmental Category</b>            | <b>Providence (MP 185.1) to<br/>Wickford Junction (MP 165.8)</b> |
|--|--|
| Land Use and Secondary Growth            | No Significant Impact  |
| Park and Recreation Areas                | No Impact  |
| Farmland                                 | No Impact  |
| Social/Environmental Justice             | No Impact  |
| Relocation                               | No Impact  |
| Economic and Joint Development           | Beneficial Impact  |
| Pedestrian and Bicycle Movement          | Beneficial Impact  |
| Air Quality                              | No Significant Impact  |
| Noise and Vibration                      | No Significant Impact  |
| Traffic                                  | No Significant Impact <sup>1</sup>                               |
| Water Quality                            | No Significant Impact  |
| Permits                                  | Permits Required   |
| Wetlands                                 | No Significant Impact  |
| Water Body Modification and Wildlife     | No Impact  |
| Floodplain                               | No Impact  |
| Wild and Scenic Rivers                   | No Impact  |
| Coastal Zone                             | No Impact  |
| Threatened and Endangered Species        | No Impact  |
| Historic and Archaeological Preservation | No Impact  |
| Hazardous Waste Sites                    | No Impact  |
| Visual                                   | No Significant Impact  |
| Energy                                   | No Impact  |
| Construction                             | No Significant Impact  |
| ADA Access and Public Safety             | Beneficial Impact  |

<sup>1</sup>Intersection improvements currently under design by RIDOT at the Route 102 intersections with Route 1 and Old Baptist Road must be completed to assure that station traffic will not impact area roadways significantly.

Issues discussed below have been identified as having “no significant impact” or were specifically addressed at the January 15, 2002 Agency Scoping Meeting. All other issues are projected to have “no impact” or a “beneficial impact,” as indicated in Table ES-1.

**Land Use and Secondary Growth Impacts** The majority of project elements conform with existing Town of North Kingstown policies and zoning and are compatible with surrounding land uses. It can be expected that limited growth will occur as a result of the proposed train station. Although the measure of this impact is uncertain, trends have indicated that new commercial development investment and single-family residential development will occur in the surrounding area. With potential construction of approximately 87 dwelling units within a one-mile radius of the proposed station (identified in the North Kingstown Build-Out Analysis<sup>2</sup>), population in the area could increase by 235 with an average 2.7 persons per household. It may be expected that this development would occur at a faster pace with construction of the station at Wickford Junction than without station construction.

<sup>2</sup> *Town of North Kingstown, RI. Comprehensive Plan. Five-Year Update.* approved June 13, 2002.

RIDOT has researched planning efforts of other commuter rail systems regarding secondary growth issues. The MBTA is currently completing environmental documentation under the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act for the extension of commuter rail from Boston to Fall River and New Bedford. A Task Force has been formed to assist 18 local communities deal in a coordinated fashion with the environmental and growth impacts of the commuter rail extension project. RIDOT will continue to monitor the progress and findings of the task force and will share documentation with the other state agencies, Statewide Planning Program and the Towns of North Kingstown and Exeter as information becomes available.

**Air Quality** Air quality impacts of 24 daily commuter trains have been previously addressed in the NECIP FEIS. This analysis exceeds the 8-train schedule currently under discussion with the MBTA. Air quality impacts related to increased vehicular traffic volume on local station-area roadways are below federal standards. No significant air quality impact will result from operation of commuter rail service on the NEC or from increased vehicular traffic at the proposed Wickford Junction Station.

**Noise and Vibration** Operation noise and vibration impacts along the corridor have been addressed in previous studies. Noise impact assessment for the SCCR is therefore limited to station construction and operation noise, including that generated by vehicular traffic volume. Station construction is projected to be completed within a limited 12 month period. Noise during this time will be similar to that generated during construction of Wickford Junction Plaza and other “big box” construction along Route 102.

With anticipated train arrivals and departures before 7AM, residents of two homes could be adversely affected by noise. The rear of one home is approximately 80 feet from the parking garage. Noise from garage will be mitigated by enclosing approximately 120 feet of the north side and 27 feet on the west side of the garage (closest to these homes). No enclosure would be required on the shorter south side of the garage (closest to Ten Rod Road). Noise from locomotives in the station was also evaluated and established to be within allowable limits. The affect of the above mentioned mitigation technique establishes the project will not cause any significant noise impacts.

**Traffic** Traffic operations were assessed at six intersections in the vicinity of Wickford Junction Station on Route 102 between Route 1 on the east and the Route 4 interchange on the west. Traffic analysis indicates these intersections operate at LOS C or better now and in the future (2006, 2014, and 2020) with or without station operation, with the following exceptions:

- Route 1 / Route 102 intersection, discussed below.
- Westbound left turn from Route 102 to the Route 4 southbound on-ramp (LOS D by 2020). Sufficient median area is available to construct an adequate left turn storage lane on Route 102 in 2020.

RIDOT Traffic Engineering is planning two intersection upgrade projects for the Route 102 corridor. Implementation of the following projects has been assumed for the purpose of the train station traffic analysis and is therefore a commitment of RIDOT for train station traffic mitigation:

- Installation of new traffic signals at the Route 102 / Old Baptist Road intersection has been approved by the State Traffic Commission and awaits further action.
- Geometric and signal timing improvements at the Route 102 / Route 1 intersection is currently at the 30% design stage. Even with implementation of RIDOT’s proposed improvements, however, traffic operations at this intersection will begin to fail (LOS F) by 2006, regardless of station operation. Historic properties and right of way issues limit further intersection improvements.

**Water Quality** The proposed Wickford Junction Station is located above the Hunt, Annaquatucket, and Pettaquamsett sole source aquifers with groundwater classified as GAA by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). The project site is also located within a Town of North Kingstown groundwater overlay district. The storm water management system proposed for the subject project will be a closed system connected to the system constructed and in place for the Wickford Junction Plaza. No groundwater infiltration units will be proposed for use. The existing basins were designed to control peak flow rates and meet water quality standards as mandated by RIDEM. The expansion of the existing storm water management system will be subject to the review and approval of RIDEM and the Town of North Kingstown. All applicable guidelines for protecting ground water and surface water quality will be followed in the design of the commuter rail station. It is anticipated that there will be no impact to surface or ground water quality from the proposed project.

**Wetlands** Proposed station construction activities are located a minimum of 70 feet from the 50-foot perimeter wetland and wooded swamp, two resource areas that are subject to jurisdiction under the Rhode Island Freshwater Wetlands Act. No impacts to wetland features are anticipated from the proposed project. Due to the location of the project's stormwater outfalls, it is likely that a RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands permit will be required. The Wickford Junction Plaza stormwater system was designed to accept runoff from the proposed station. Coordination with the Town of North Kingstown and the appropriate officials will occur as needed during the permitting process.

**Historic and Archaeological Preservation** The Wickford Junction Commuter Rail Station Site has been reviewed by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) and it was determined that the property under consideration does not contain any historical buildings or sites that are listed on or are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The site does fall within the traditional homelands of the Narragansett Indian Tribe and there are a number of significant archaeological sites nearby. RIHPHC has determined that the potential for archaeological resources on the subject property is directly connected to the extent to which it has been disturbed. They have concluded in a prior review of the property that any sites that may have existed were destroyed by gravel excavation and that no archaeological sites remain in the project area. These comments were provided in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and are outlined in a letter from RIHPHC to Commonwealth Engineers & Consultants, Inc. dated April 23, 1998 (see Appendix).

**Visual** The proposed location of the Wickford Junction Station is currently used as a construction storage site with visible stockpiles of construction debris and materials. The design of proposed station improvements would reflect the architectural style of the other building within Wickford Junction Plaza. The station would appear as an integral part of the Plaza's traffic flow and retail uses. A combination of proposed grading, loam, seed and landscape plantings, existing trees and other dense vegetation, would provide a visual screen of the facility for the surrounding area outside of the Plaza. With the elevation of the rail approximately ten feet above the ground elevation at the proposed parking garage, part of the parking structure will be obscured by the track itself.

**Construction** It is estimated that station improvements will be completed within 12 months and will be similar to impacts associated with construction of Wickford Junction Plaza and other new development on the Route 102 corridor.

## SECTION 1 – PURPOSE AND NEED

### 1.1 Introduction

Rhode Island recognizes the potential for commuter rail service to reduce congestion and improve mobility and has taken steps in recent years to increase commuter rail services in the state. In 1988, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) reinstituted commuter rail service between Providence and Boston through the Pilgrim Partnership Agreement with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). In 1995, the Pilgrim Partnership II Agreement extended the term of the agreement for an additional ten years and added service between the two cities. Most recently, both agencies have agreed on an additional five (5) year extension through 2009. RIDOT has recently completed the *South County Commuter Rail Service Operations Plan*, which evaluated alternatives for extending service from Providence to Westerly. In anticipation of extended service, the state has initiated final design of the Warwick Intermodal Train Station, conducted a non-NEPA environmental evaluation at Wickford Junction, and has included this project in the proposed FY 2003-2004 state Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Extension of commuter rail service from Providence to Wickford Junction represents the minimal operating segment (MOS) of future Providence to Westerly service.

RIDOT is now seeking approval of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Start funding for extension of commuter rail service along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor (NEC) from Providence to Wickford Junction, North Kingstown, in the South County area.

Rhode Island is one of the most densely populated states in the United States. Population growth over the past several years has outstripped projections, with some of the highest rates of growth occurring in the area of Rhode Island referred to as "South County" including portions of two counties south of the Providence metropolitan area. The estimated 2000 census data show that 82.26% of work trips in the state were made via the single-occupant vehicle (SOV), while only 2.06% of work trips were made by transit. This SOV mode share for work trips is higher than the estimated 2000 national average, while the transit mode share is lower. Furthermore, Rhode Island has shown a larger rate of increase in SOV commuting than the rest of the country, and annual average vehicle miles of travel (VMT) in Rhode Island has risen 90% since 1970.

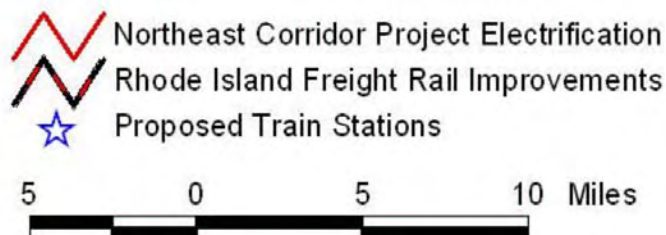
Although growth in VMT has increased congestion significantly on the roadways, recent investments in the Northeast Corridor for Amtrak high-speed rail have created a travel corridor in which there is excess capacity. This resource could be tapped for commuter rail service to provide an attractive travel alternative that would reduce SOV trips on congested highways.

### 1.2 Previous Studies

Several previous environmental studies have been conducted which addressed use of the Northeast Corridor in Rhode Island. These studies were scoped to include environmental issues associated with commuter rail use as a means to expediting the environmental process for this New Starts project and were conducted in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Studies listed below address either station issues or improvements along the corridor. A summary of each report is followed by an environmental impact chart outlining the environmental issues addressed in the Warwick Intermodal Station Environmental Assessment, Wickford Junction Commuter Rail Station Site Assessment, Rhode Island Freight Rail Improvement Project EIS and the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project Electrification EIS. All but the Wickford Junction site assessment were prepared and circulated in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Figure 1-1 identifies the station



Figure 1-1  
**NEPA Rail Project Areas**  
 Rhode Island



locations and rail corridors addressed in these documents. Documents are available for review at RIDOT Intermodal Planning Division office.

**Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report Northeast Corridor Improvement Project Electrification – New Haven, CT to Boston, MA** The FRA circulated the final EIS in 1994 and a Record of Decision (ROD) was issued in May 1995.<sup>3</sup> Prior to implementation Amtrak trains operating over the NEC between Washington, D.C. and New Haven, CT were powered by electricity transmitted to the trains by catenary. NEC trains continuing on to Boston changed to diesel locomotives in New Haven. Amtrak proposed to complete the electrification of the Northeast Corridor to reduce intercity express train trip times between those two cities, with intermediate stops, to less than 3 hours. The project area in Rhode Island extends from Westerly to Central Falls and includes the entire NEC within the state.

The proposed action was projected to have little impact on the current operations of commuter railroads using the NEC main line. MBTA contracts with Amtrak to operate commuter rail service between Boston and Providence. Discussion of project impacts included RIDOT's plans to reinstate commuter rail service south of Providence to Kingston (subject of this environmental assessment, EA). Service on the Providence-Kingston segment is projected to increase from 0 to 24 trains per day by 2020.<sup>4</sup>

The primary area of concern for the South County Commuter Rail Environmental Assessment is the potential impact on NEC capacity of the significantly higher number of intercity trains using the NEC as a result of the NECIP as a whole and additional commuter trains planned by the stations. Sufficient capacity improvements have been included in the Northeast Corridor Transportation Plan to accommodate all users' projected needs. This project has been constructed and is now operational with Acela high speed and regional service.

**Rhode Island Freight Rail Improvement Project – Final Environmental Impact Statement** The FHWA final EIS was circulated in January 1998 and the ROD was issued in May 1998.<sup>5</sup> The Rhode Island Freight Rail Improvement (FRIP) project proposed track and overhead bridge construction and rehabilitation, within a 22-mile section of Amtrak's NEC right of way (ROW), extending south from the Massachusetts state line to Quonset/Davisville in Rhode Island. The study addressed all but two miles of the corridor to the proposed Wickford Junction Station. These improvements preserve existing and future freight movement and aid in the redevelopment of the former Quonset Point/Davisville Naval facility now known as Quonset/Davisville Port and Commerce Park (Q/D). The Preferred Alternative utilizes an existing freight track, existing mainline tracks, and a new freight dedicated track within the NEC ROW. FRIP construction was initiated in April 2000 by Amtrak, with mainline modifications as part of Package 6A.

**Warwick Station Environmental Assessment** As authorized under the 1998 Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA 21) the RIDOT proposed to construct an Amtrak and commuter rail station in the

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<sup>3</sup> US Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration, Northeast Corridor Improvement Project Electrification, Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report and Section 4(f) Statement, New Haven, CT to Boston MA. Final Report, October 1994. Record of Decision Final Report, May 1995.

<sup>4</sup> US Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration, Northeast Corridor Improvement Project Electrification, Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report and Section 4(f) Statement, New Haven, CT to Boston MA. Final Report, October 1994. Pages 4-67, Table 4.9-7 Commuter Rail Service.

<sup>5</sup> US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Rhode Island Freight Rail Improvement Project, Final Environmental Impact Statement Final Section 4(f) Evaluation, January 1998. Record of Decision Final Report, May 1998.

Hillsgrove area of the City of Warwick along the NEC. An automated people mover would be the connection between the train station and T.F. Green Airport. This project was the subject of an environmental assessment.<sup>6</sup> A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued on July 6, 1999. On March 27, 2001 and February 1, 2002 RIDOT submitted environmental reevaluations to FHWA for project change from a surface parking lot with a stand alone station to a multi-level parking garage, station, and consolidated rental car facility.<sup>7</sup> FHWA accepted the findings that additional environmental impacts could be mitigated with the actions described in the reevaluations.

### 1.3 Purpose and Need

RIDOT has initiated the SCCR project to address the potential for commuter rail service from South County communities to Providence with connections to Boston. The goal of the project is to provide a viable commuter rail alternative to use of the single occupancy vehicles along the I-95/Route 4 corridor south of Providence.

The purpose of the South County Commuter Rail Project is to help Rhode Island meet its current and future needs to enhance the transportation system, improve air quality, link transportation with land use and support economic development initiatives. One purpose of the South County Commuter Rail project is to improve the transportation system by reducing congestion, improving safety and providing intermodal connections as outlined in the Congestion Management System (CMS) Plan. The CMS Plan identified the I-95 and Route 1/Route 4 corridors as potential locations for application of transit alternatives. These highway segments are identified in Figures 1-2. Commuter rail service south of Providence helps to achieve congestion reduction goals by reducing trips on both corridors. South County commuter rail service would also provide needed intermodal connections such as access to the increasingly popular T.F. Green Airport via RIDOT's Warwick Intermodal Station.

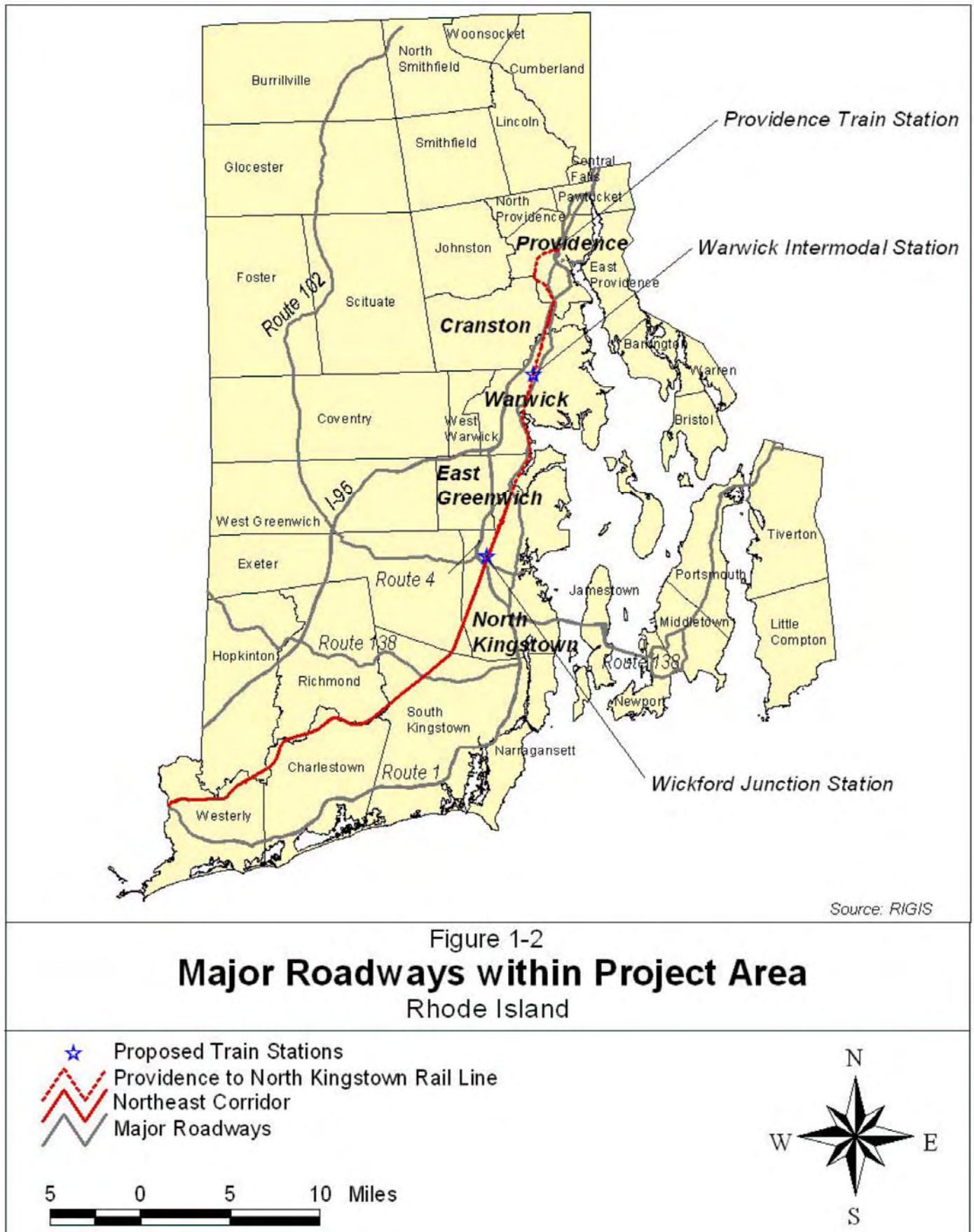
RIDOT's ongoing commitment is to maintain the existing highway and rail infrastructure as part of its "fix it first" agenda. RIDOT has committed to the maximum utilization of this infrastructure to avoid construction of new highways and rail lines. Because Rhode Island is a small, densely populated state, it provides an ideal environment for successful implementation of transit services in its more-developed urban/suburban corridors. Use of Amtrak's NEC infrastructure would support the state's transportation/land use goals by adding capacity to the transportation system without necessitating additional roadway expansion that could encroach on open space or the existing built environment.

The final purpose of the South County Commuter Rail project is to support the state's goal (as stated in the *Transportation 2020 Ground Transportation Plan 2001 Update*) of using transportation to support regional economic development goals. South County commuter rail service has the potential to spur economic development in the state in several ways. First, commuter rail service would provide connections to employment opportunities in urban and suburban areas as well as universities, retail centers and medical facilities in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Second, commuter rail stations offer opportunities to attract new commercial development, including redevelopment in the Warwick Station Redevelopment District at T.F. Green Airport. Finally, extended commuter rail service would provide economic advantages by reducing SOV trips, which could decrease congestion and improve travel times for those accessing area businesses.

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<sup>6</sup> US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, Rhode Island Department of Transportation, *Warwick Intermodal Station Environmental Assessment*, May 1999. Finding of No Significant Impact, July 1999.

<sup>7</sup> RIDOT, March 27, 2001 Warwick Intermodal Station Reevaluation of Environmental Assessment. FHWA Concurrence: April 3, 2001. RIDOT, February 1, 2002 Reevaluation of the Environmental Assessment D'Ambra Property and Intermodal Garage/People Mover Parcels, Warwick, Rhode Island. FHWA Concurrence: February 13, 2002.



## 1.4 Consistency with State and Local Plans

The proposed project is specifically consistent with the following state and local plans:

**Rhode Island Department of Administration, State Ground Transportation Plan, 2001 Update, Element 611: Transportation 2020** One objective of achieving the state's transportation goals, as indicated in the *State Ground Transportation Plan* (Statewide Planning Program, Rhode Island Department of Administration) is to implement the following action, "Test the potential for new transportation services by rail and water. Extend Boston-Providence commuter rail service south in incremental steps to T.F. Green Airport, Wickford Junction, Kingston and Westerly. ... Study the growth and land use impacts of extended rail passenger service, and work with affected communities to insure that adequate growth management measures are in place."

**Rhode Island Rail Corridor Feasibility Study, November 1994** The Rail Corridor Feasibility Study identifies selected station locations on the Amtrak Shore Line as T.F. Green Airport in Warwick and Wickford Junction in North Kingstown. For the Wickford Junction station site, the study states, "Land use in the vicinity of the proposed station is sparse residential. Noise barriers are unlikely to be necessary at this site," and "There are no wetlands, water quality, vegetation or local ecology, noise, park or recreational, or historic impacts anticipated in this area."

**Town of North Kingstown, Comprehensive Plan Update, final approval June 13, 2002** *The Town of North Kingstown's Comprehensive Plan clearly addresses the purpose and need of a transit center at Wickford Junction and the encouragement of alternative transit modes. Several references are made under III. Circulation Element:*

"Goal C.2 Improve the availability and utilization of alternative transportation modes":

"Objective C.2.2 Encourage the development of multi-modal transportation hubs."

"Action C.2.2.1 Identify areas of Town where multi-modal transportation hubs can provide a range of alternative transportation options for residents and visitors."

"Action C.2.2.2 Develop transit centers in West Davisville and Wickford Junction."

"Objective C.2.6 Actively encourage the provision and extension of commuter rail service to North Kingstown, and other areas of South County, consistent with the 1994 Rhode Island Rail Corridor Feasibility Study."

**North Kingstown Town Council Resolution** The town council endorsed the station location in an October 5, 1999 resolution:

*WHEREAS, the Town of North Kingstown supports the development of a commuter rail station at Wickford Junction; and*

*WHEREAS, the Town of North Kingstown Comprehensive Plan designates such commuter rail for the Wickford Junction commercial plaza; and*

*WHEREAS, siting the commuter rail station within the Wickford Junction commercial plaza allows for the integration of compatible uses and provides security that a stand alone commuter rail parking facility would not; and*

*WHEREAS, other sites in the Wickford Junction area, including the former Wickford Junction Rail Station, are considered unsuitable due to environmental constraints, traffic conflicts, impacts on historic districts, or impacts on Town recreation and conservation land.*

## 1.5 Agency Coordination and Public Involvement

RIDOT has coordinated with agencies and the public throughout the SCCR project and prior rail studies.

**Prior Public Meetings** Extensive public participation programs were integral to all rail projects conducted by RIDOT and other agencies in Rhode Island. Over fifteen meetings have been held for the Warwick Station and

Wickford Junction projects, the FRIP, and NEC Electrification projects. A public meeting held at the North Kingstown High School on September 17, 1998 specifically addressed the proposed station at Wickford Junction.

**Agency Coordination and Scoping Meeting** On January 15, 2002 an agency scoping and coordination meeting was held for the SCCR EA, attended by 28 representatives of federal, state and local agencies and transportation professionals. The Statewide Planning Program and the Town of North Kingstown expressed support for the project. The following scope issues were raised:

- Secondary growth impacts should be assessed for communities at the end of the rail line.
- Connections to bus service at the station should be addressed.
- Traffic analysis should include Route 102 to Route 4 (including the Old Baptist Road intersection) and include the Routes 4 and 1 intersection.

Items discussed which are not directly related to the scope of the EA include possible long-term commuter rail service from Providence to Worcester; potential future shuttle service from Warwick to Providence to augment commuter rail service; possible location of a commuter rail station in East Greenwich; and future consideration of electrification of commuter rail service. Discussion included the foresight of RIDOT to include commuter rail in previous NEPA studies, the importance of providing sufficient parking at a few accessible stations to maximize the appeal of commuter rail service.

**Evidence of Coordination Through Agency Correspondence** Throughout the process of completing previous NEPA documents and completing this environmental assessment, there has been full cooperation and correspondence with federal, state, and local agencies. Agency correspondence is available for review at the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Room 372, Two Capitol Hill Road, Providence, Rhode Island.

## SECTION 2 - PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

### 2.1 Preferred Alternative

The proposed South County Commuter Rail (SCCR) project includes extension of commuter rail along the Northeast Corridor (NEC) from Providence (Mile Post 185.1) to North Kingstown with new stations at Warwick (MP 176.6) and Wickford Junction (MP 165.8). This twenty-mile extension of service represents the minimal operating segment of future Providence to Westerly service (MP 141.3). It is anticipated that service to Warwick and Wickford Junction will be provided by the MBTA under the Pilgrim Partnership II Agreement. Project components include:

- Commuter Rail Service Extension
- Warwick Intermodal Station
- Wickford Junction Station and Track Improvements

**Commuter Rail Service Extension** RIDOT's July 2001 *South County Commuter Rail Service Operations Plan Executive Summary*<sup>8</sup> evaluated alternatives for extending commuter rail service from Providence to Westerly along the NEC. *Operations Plan* alternatives included a stand-alone commuter service between Providence and Westerly, extension of Connecticut Department of Transportation Shore Line East commuter rail service, and extension of MBTA commuter rail service south from Providence. The *Operations Plan* recommends the extension of commuter rail service twenty miles south from Providence to Wickford Junction, currently provided by the MBTA.

Extension of commuter rail service has been coordinated with the Amtrak Acela Express and Regional service, the MBTA, and the Freight Rail Improvement Project (FRIP) between Providence and Davisville, RI. Proposed commuter rail service includes eight round-trip trains to provide a reverse commute connection to T.F. Green Airport. Airport flight rush hours differ slightly from traditional commuter rail rush hours, requiring additional trains to connect. Compared to Providence to Westerly service, service from Providence to Warwick and Wickford garners 70 percent of the total ridership at 60 percent of the capital cost and only 45 percent of the annual operations and maintenance cost. South County service on eight round-trip trains includes four morning departures, one mid day arrival/departure, and three evening arrivals.

As part of the Environmental Assessment coordination process, Amtrak suggested that RIDOT consider the extension of the proposed service an additional seven (7) miles to Kingston Station. However, upon further review, it was determined that a more detailed study on parking and traffic impacts at Kingston is warranted, in addition to further operational analyses along the Northeast Corridor. Should RIDOT proceed with an extension of service from Wickford Junction to Kingston, it would be subject to a future environmental analysis.

**Warwick Intermodal Station** In May of 1999 the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) submitted to the Federal Highway Administration an environmental assessment for the Warwick Intermodal Station at T.F. Green Airport in Warwick Rhode Island. With improvements in Amtrak service and passenger growth at T.F. Green Airport (reflecting operation of the new Sundlun Terminal and Southwest Airline service), RIDOT and State and local transportation officials have sought to create an intermodal gateway connecting the two transportation facilities. The 1998 TEA-21 authorized \$25 million for a new Warwick Amtrak/Commuter Rail Station with an elevated people mover to connect the new station to the Airport terminal building.

<sup>8</sup> South County Commuter Rail Service, *Providence to Westerly Operations Plan Executive Summary*, prepared by Edwards and Kelcey for the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, July 2001.

The key elements of the project include the design of a 5 level (not including ground level) train station and parking garage. This structure will incorporate the following key elements:

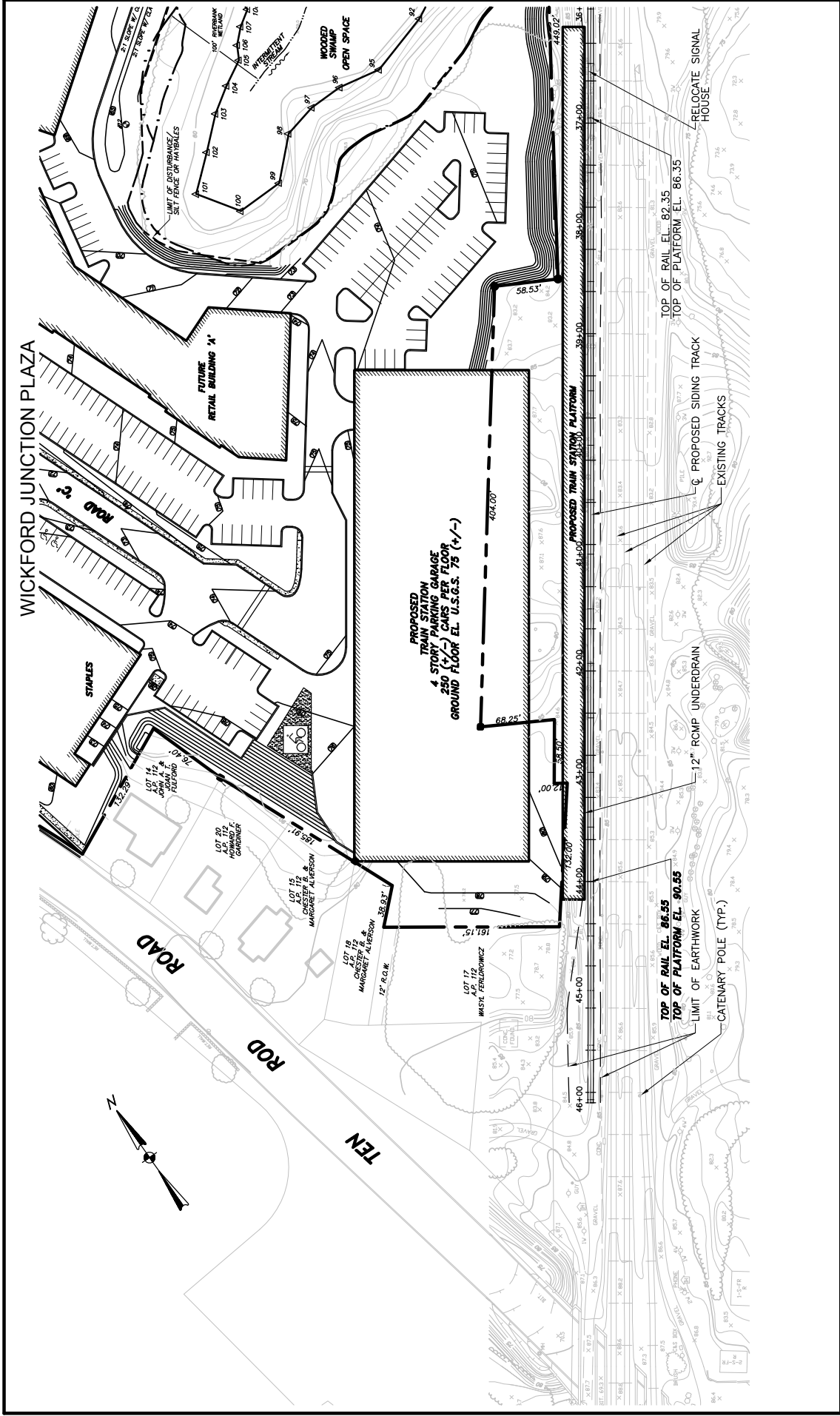
- Intermodal facility for short-term station pickup/drop off, intercity and RIPTA bus, taxis, and limousine/van shuttles.
- Approximately 1,000 commuter/Amtrak parking spaces.
- Consolidated rental car facility for all nine firms currently operating at T.F. Green Airport with space for approximately 2,000 vehicles. Quick Turn Around (QTA) fueling, vacuum, and wash facilities for rental cars on three levels.
- Amtrak Station, Rental Car lobby and People Mover lobby on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor
- People mover between the station and the airport, 30 feet above ground level
- ADA-accessibility to Amtrak and commuter rail platforms

Design of the Warwick Intermodal Station and rental car garage is currently underway. No additional track or signal changes are required for operation of this station. The Warwick Intermodal Station at T.F. Green Airport will be operational in 2004, serving both MBTA commuter rail service to Boston and Amtrak Acela Regional Service.

**Wickford Junction Station and Track Improvements** Wickford Junction is 18 miles south of Providence Station and 10 miles south of the proposed station at T.F. Green Airport in Warwick. The preferred site is in an undeveloped section of Wickford Junction Plaza, located in the north quadrant of the intersection of Route 102 and Amtrak's NEC. The selection of this site has the support of the North Kingstown Town Council, Town Officials, Wickford Junction Plaza developer, and the commuting public present at a public workshop held on September 17, 1998 by RIDOT at North Kingstown High School. Station operation represents an opportunity to create a public/private partnership with the Wickford Junction Plaza developer.

Wickford Junction Station is a critical component in the South County Commuter Rail plan, providing 58 percent of the total projected commuter rail ridership between Providence and Westerly. The proposed station, located a half mile from Route 4, a major arterial connecting Route 1 with the Providence-Warwick metropolitan area, will provide access to an attractive rail alternative in this corridor. Proposed trackside facilities at Wickford Junction Station will include partial canopies and a high level platform in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act. Parking for 1000 cars (including both structured and surface lots) will be provided to meet the parking demand determined in previous studies. Figure 2-1 presents proposed improvements at Wickford Junction.

As indicated in the SCCR Operations Plan, Amtrak's NEC between Providence and Westerly is a two track, high-speed railroad, capable of supporting much higher train densities than currently exist. The maximum authorized speeds for SCCR service is not anticipated to require speeds higher than 80 MPH, therefore the existing and proposed NEC track infrastructure will provide more than sufficient resources to operate the SCCR service without any further upgrades or enhancements. The existing signal system currently in place on the NEC will adequately support the operation of the SCCR service. No interlocking reconfigurations are necessary to support the SCCR. A new side track and interlocking are required at the Wickford Junction Station location to provide turnback to Providence.



|  |  |  |                  |
|--|--|--|------------------|
| EDWARDS AND KELCEY, INC.<br>Date: November, 2001 | Wickford Junction Station<br>Parking Garage Location Plan<br>North Kingstown, Rhode Island | RHODE ISLAND<br>DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | Scale:<br>N.T.S. |
|--|--|--|------------------|

## 2.2 Rail Service

RIDOT is currently negotiating with the MBTA to extend commuter rail service south from the current terminus at Providence Station, as an amendment to the Pilgrim Partnership II Agreement. Weekday commuter service only is proposed for Warwick and Wickford Junction. Amtrak has agreed to stop at Warwick, but no Amtrak service is anticipated at Wickford Junction Station. A preliminary eight-train schedule includes four departures northbound from Wickford between 5:45 and 8:00 AM, a midday arrival/departure will add flexibility to the schedule with three evening trains expected to arrive southbound between 6:15 and 9:45 PM. While this schedule is preliminary, it is provided to determine the worst case operational impacts in the following section.

## 2.3 Ridership

An internal ridership analysis was completed for RIDOT's South County Commuter Rail Service, extending MBTA commuter rail service south from Providence to proposed stations in Warwick and Wickford Junction in North Kingstown. The objective was to identify growth trends in South County which support the extension of commuter rail service to South County.

Based on the state population of 1,048,319 (2000 Census Data), 46 percent live within 20 minutes of the two proposed stations in Warwick and Wickford and existing station in Providence. Total population within the 20-minute travel time of the Warwick Intermodal Station is 106,221 in Warwick, West Warwick, and Cranston. The total population in the 20-minute radius for the Wickford Junction Station is 45,768 with Census Tracts in North Kingstown, Exeter, East Greenwich, Narragansett, and South Kingstown.

In 1995 Cambridge Systematics, Inc. (CSI) prepared commuter rail ridership projections for the *Freight Rail Improvement Project EIS* for 2000 and 2010. CSI's study included station stops in Westerly, Kingstown, Wickford Junction, Warwick, and Providence but did not include service from Providence to Boston. The study concluded that 76 percent of Providence bound trips from Wickford Junction and Warwick originated in Wickford. These projections were supported by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) who developed ridership projections for the Westerly-Providence commuter rail service as part of the South County Commuter Rail Project in September 2001. When comparing the VHB mode shares to the 1990 journey to work shares the model share for Providence to Boston bound trips doubles from 5% to/from Providence and 25% to/from Boston to 9% to/from Providence and 50% to/from Boston with the introduction of commuter rail service south of Providence. This is a reasonable and generous result. Therefore CSI's ridership projection will be used as the basis of project design and environmental assessment. This will assure continuity of ridership projections in all South County Commuter Rail documentation (Warwick Intermodal Station EA, SCCR Operations Plan and this document, the FTA Environmental Assessment for SCCR). Table 2-1 displays the Year 2010 and 2020 Ridership Forecast completed by CSI.

**TABLE 2-1**  
**Passenger<sup>(1)</sup> Ridership Forecast – Projected, 2010 and 2020**

| Station Location  | 2010  | 2020 <sup>(2)</sup> |
|-------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Wickford Junction | 1,496 | 1,669               |
| Warwick           | 237   | 245                 |
| TOTAL             | 1,733 | 1,914               |

Source: *Commuter Rail Ridership Demand Analysis*, F. R. Harris, Inc., December 26, 1995 (Cambridge Systematics, Inc.).

(1) one passenger = two trips

(2) 2020 projections developed from CSI 2010 projections for the *South County Commuter Rail Operations Plan*, Edwards and Kelcey, July 2001.

## SECTION 3 - POTENTIAL IMPACT

Section 3 addresses environmental consequences of construction and operation of the South County Commuter Rail service for those actions not previously assessed in prior NEPA documents for Warwick Station and the NEC. Corridor impacts associated with operation of Amtrak, commuter rail and freight service along the NEC from Westerly to Central Falls were previously addressed in the NECIP<sup>9</sup>. Corridor impacts associated with operation of freight service and commuter rail along the NEC from the Davisville Interlocking to Central Falls was previously addressed in the FRIP<sup>10</sup>. No further environmental assessment of operational impacts along the corridor is required. Station impacts at Warwick were addressed in the Warwick intermodal Station EA<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, the analysis of potential impacts in this section has focused on construction of Wickford Junction Station with limited track improvements. Table 3-1 indicates environmental categories evaluated in previous NEPA studies and the Wickford Junction Station Site Assessment. Appendix A presents more specific information with page references.

**TABLE 3-1**

**Summary of Environmental Impacts of Previous Studies**

| Environmental Category               | STATION                                  |                                | NEC CORRIDOR                 |   |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
|                                      | Warwick Intermodal Station EA (MP 176.6) | Wickford Junction (MP 165.8) * | FRIP - EIS (MP 168.3 to 190) | NECIP Electrification – EIS (MP 141.3 to 190) |
| Land Use                             | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Park and Recreation Areas            | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Farmland                             | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Social/ Environmental Justice        | ✓  |                                | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Relocation                           | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Economic and Joint Development       | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Pedestrian and Bicycle Movement      | ✓  |                                | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Air Quality                          | ✓  |                                | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Noise and Vibration                  | ✓ (noise only)                           |                                | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Traffic                              | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Ridership                            | ✓  | ✓                              |                              | ✓   |
| Water Quality                        | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Permits                              | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Wetland                              | ✓  |                                | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Water Body Modification and Wildlife | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Floodplain                           | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Wild and Scenic Rivers               | ✓  |                                |                              |   |
| Coastal Zone                         | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |

<sup>9</sup> US Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration, Northeast Corridor Improvement Project Electrification, Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report and Section 4(f) Statement, New Haven, CT to Boston MA. Final Report, October 1994. Record of Decision Final Report, May 1995.

<sup>10</sup> US Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration, Northeast Corridor Improvement Project Electrification, Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report and Section 4(f) Statement, New Haven, CT to Boston MA. Final Report, October 1994. Pages 4-67, Table 4.9-7 Commuter Rail Service.

<sup>11</sup> RIDOT, March 27, 2001 Warwick Intermodal Station Reevaluation of Environmental Assessment. FHWA Concurrence: April 3, 2001. RIDOT, February 1, 2002 Reevaluation of the Environmental Assessment D'Ambra Property and Intermodal Garage/People Mover Parcels, Warwick, Rhode Island. FHWA Concurrence: February 13, 2002.

| Environmental Category                   | STATION                                  |                                | NEC CORRIDOR                 |   |
|--|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
|  | Warwick Intermodal Station EA (MP 176.6) | Wickford Junction (MP 165.8) * | FRIP - EIS (MP 168.3 to 190) | NECIP Electrification – EIS (MP 141.3 to 190) |
| Historic and Archaeological Preservation | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Hazardous Waste Sites                    | ✓  |                                | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Visual                                   | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Energy                                   | ✓  | ✓                              | ✓                            | ✓   |
| Construction                             | ✓  |                                | ✓                            | ✓   |
| ADA Access and Public Safety             | ✓  |                                |                              |   |

\* Wickford Junction Commuter Rail Station Site Assessment not prepared or circulated as a NEPA Document

The project areas for NEPA studies are identified in Figure 3-1. The following assessment includes environmental categories identified in FTA's environmental impact regulation, Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 771,<sup>12</sup> focusing only on those items not previously addressed in NEPA documents. Appendix A includes a listing of page references in prior NEPA documents for environmental categories for both existing conditions and impacts, as required.

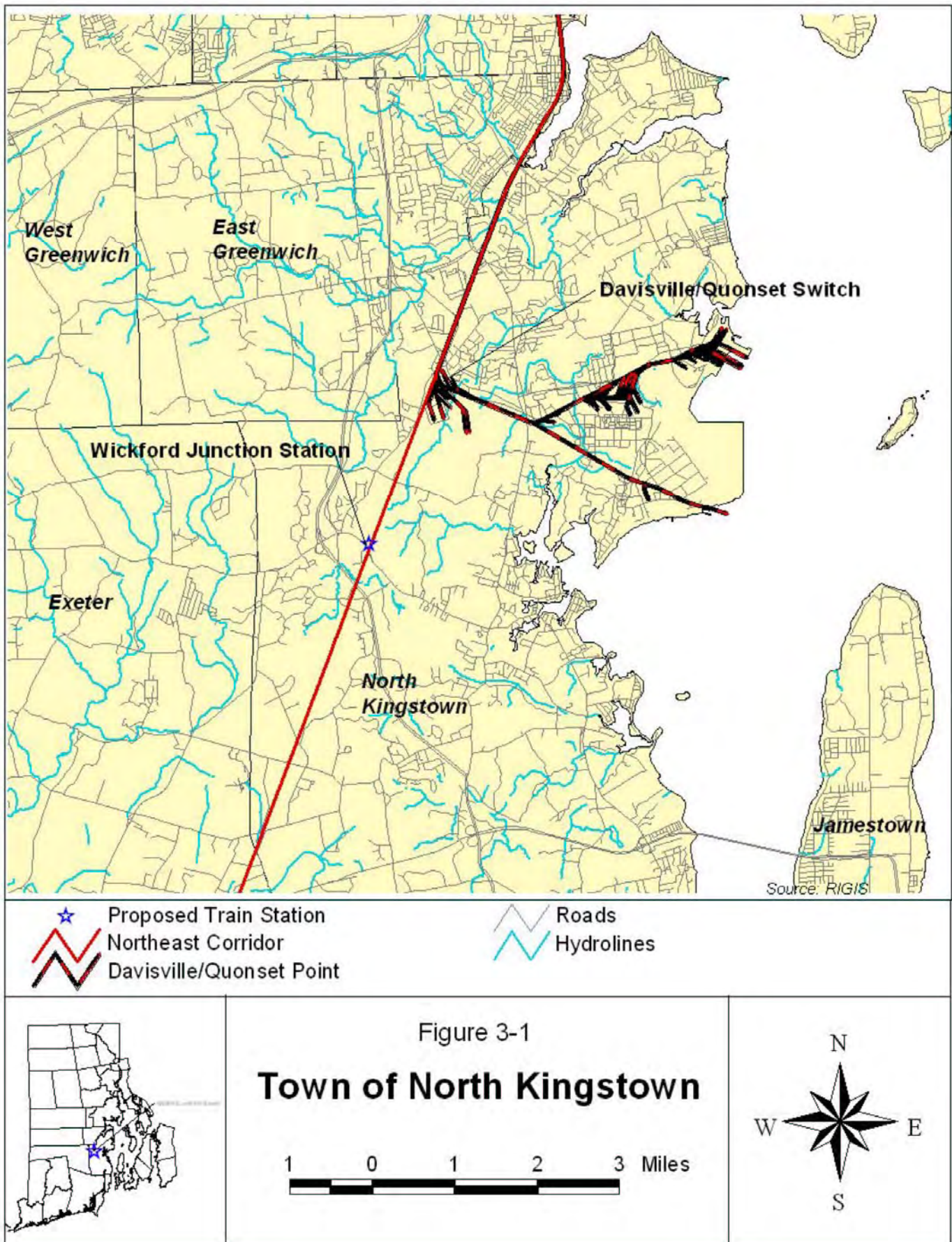
### 3.1 Land Use and Secondary Growth Impacts

**Land Use** Wickford Junction Station is located in North Kingstown within a suburban setting on Route 102 (Ten Rod Road), southeast of the Route 4 (four lane limited access highway) interchange with Route 102 and Route 2 (Quaker Lane). Route 102 is locally referenced as Ten Rod Road and Victory Highway. A RIDOT Park and Ride Lot is located at the intersection of Routes 2 and 102. The park and ride lot includes a RIPTA bus shelter and 78 parking spaces. This lot frequently operates at capacity.

The proposed Wickford Junction Station will be located at the northwest quadrant of the intersection of the NEC and Route 102, within Wickford Junction Plaza, a village-type shopping center. The Town of North Kingstown has approved 300,000 square feet of construction for this commercial plaza. Wal-Mart and Staples are the anchor stores with small businesses (Holmes Jewelers, WJ Medical Walk-in, Martinos Pizzeria, Aesthetic Dentistry, Cleaners, and Hair Crew) located in a strip mall within the plaza. Four additional storefronts are vacant. The site proposed for the station and parking garage is currently vacant and includes storage yards for contractors. Three homes along Route 102 are adjacent to the station site on the west side of the NEC. Several homes and a small business are located east of the NEC on Route 102.

**Zoning** Both Wickford Junction Plaza and the proposed station location are zoned Planned Business District. The project site is also located within a Town of North Kingstown groundwater overlay district. Three small lots with frontage on Ten Rod Road (adjacent to the proposed station and commercial development in the Plaza) are developed with single family houses; two are zoned Village Residential and one is zoned Multifamily Residential. A vacant lot adjacent to the west of the NEC is zoned General Business. Zoning east of and adjacent to the NEC includes General Business (two lots on Ten Rod Road) and Neighborhood Residential (a landlocked 42-acre parcel). Property fronting Ten Rod Road to the east is zoned Village Residential and is developed as single family housing. Zoning adjacent to the NEC between Wickford Junction and Davisville is Neighborhood

<sup>12</sup> US Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration, "Environmental Impact and Related Procedures." Final Rule, 52 Federal Register 32646-32669; August 28, 1987 (23 CFR 771).



Residential south of Stoney Lane. The rail line north of Stoney Lane borders property zoned Open Space/Public Land (including Stony Lane Elementary School), Institutional/Office, Village Residential, Neighborhood Residential, and Open Space.

Zoning along the Route 102 corridor in North Kingstown from Wickford Junction to the Town of Exeter boundary primarily includes Village Residential with mixed areas of cluster subdivisions, General Business and Neighborhood Business. Village Residential areas are primarily single-family dwellings and are close to major circulation facilities and commercial development. Neighborhood Residential zones include moderate density residential areas with natural limitations for development. General Business zones are primarily created to provide areas for intensive commercial activities that primarily depend upon traffic volume and serve the daily shopping needs of the community. The Planned Business District located at Wickford Junction Plaza is intended to meet the commercial objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Zoning in the northeast portion of the Town of Exeter, abutting North Kingstown includes rural districts for the primary purpose of providing adequate land suitable for low density residential rural development blended with forestry, farming and recreational activities to protect land now used for these purposes. The southeastern portion of Exeter including Route 2 is zoned for a mix of uses including Planned District which allows for business and light industrial, Business District which provides for areas of day-to-day business services and Residential District with density determined by the suitability of water and soils for ISDS. The western part of the town includes a small Light Industrial District, with much of the remaining areas dedicated as Conservation/Recreation and Open Space and Public Land.

**Growth Trends** North Kingstown is classified as suburban due to its low gross population density and growth whereas Exeter is considered a rural, emerging suburb having very low gross population density but rapid growth<sup>13</sup>. Nevertheless, growth trends in both towns are increasing. Both communities grew by 10.7% between 1990 and 2000 according to the US Bureau of the Census (Exeter increased by 584 persons to 6,045 and North Kingstown by 2,540 persons to 26,326). Existing commercial development in Exeter is minimal whereas North Kingstown includes commercial districts in Wickford Village, Wickford Junction and along Post Road. Residential units in North Kingstown are encouraged in cluster subdivisions whereas Exeter encourages large lot zoning.

Residential and commercial growth may be promoted if adequate utility infrastructure including municipal sewer and water service is available. If this infrastructure is available, lot density may not be constrained by soil conditions or dimensional requirements between wells and individual sewage disposal systems (ISDS). Neither North Kingstown nor Exeter offers municipal wastewater treatment and therefore development is constrained by the suitability of the soil for construction of ISDS. Exeter relies on private well water while municipal water service is provided in North Kingstown. Limits on the capacity of the Exeter school system also constrain development in that town.

The Town of North Kingstown conducted a Build-Out Study as part of their Comprehensive Plan Update process in 2000<sup>14</sup>. The build-out was a revision of a 1998 build-out study and reflected a greater level of analysis of available developable land. According to the study, North Kingstown's available residential development potential is primarily along the south and western portions of the town. Approximately 42% of new growth between 1990 and 2000 has occurred in the southwest corner of the town. The study indicates that 1,410 residential dwellings units

<sup>13</sup> *Cost of Suburban Sprawl*. Grow Smart RI. 2000.

<sup>14</sup> *Town of North Kingstown, RI Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Update*, Approved June 13, 2002.

are potentially developable based on soil capacity and current zoning. It is estimated that 87 dwelling units (or 6.2% of total expected dwellings units) could be constructed within a one mile radius of the proposed Wickford Junction Station and about 13.5% of total buildout (191 of 1,410 units) could be seen within approximately 1½ miles.

The Town of Exeter also conducted a Build-Out Study as part of the Community Comprehensive Plan in 2001. Approximately 60 percent of Exeter's 37,370 total acres are currently undeveloped and developable (21,666 acres). Exeter's maximum estimated buildout is at 5,508 units, including 3,900 units east of Route 3, within seven miles of Wickford Junction.

**Growth Management** Local growth policies and regulations are the primary determinant of growth impact. An effective long-range comprehensive plan, zoning and subdivision regulations, and phasing caps are important implementation tools. Both communities are managing growth based on recent trends. North Kingstown is encouraging cluster residential development and purchasing development rights to increase preservation areas. Exeter's Growth Management Study indicates that the most appropriate method for managing growth is developing a rate-of-growth program and instituting impact fees. In response to school overcrowding in the Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District, Exeter adopted a Growth Control Ordinance effective January 1, 2002 which limits residential building permits to 22 per year issued by quarter (6,6,5,5). This ordinance shall be reviewed annually by the Town Council based on school enrollment. The Town of West Greenwich will also manage growth based on a building cap of 20 units per year to be effective on July 1, 2002.

**Comprehensive Plans** According to Chapter 45-22.2 of the Rhode Island General Laws, the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act requires towns and cities to update comprehensive plans every five years. Although the original North Kingstown Comprehensive Plan was approved in 1995, Statewide Planning Program extensions of the North Kingstown comprehensive plan expired August 12, 2001. The Town submitted a draft Comprehensive Plan Update to the Statewide Planning Program for review on July 27, 2001. The Town of Exeter has yet to receive approval for the initial Comprehensive Plan. The draft is currently under review at the Statewide Planning Program.

**Secondary Growth Impacts** The majority of project elements conform with existing Town of North Kingstown policies and zoning and are compatible with surrounding land uses. It can be expected that limited growth will occur as a result of the proposed train station. Although the measure of this impact is uncertain, trends have indicated that new commercial development investment and single-family residential development will occur in the surrounding area. With potential construction of approximately 87 dwelling units (identified in the North Kingstown Build-Out Analysis<sup>15</sup>) within a one-mile radius of the proposed station, population in the area could increase by 235 with an average 2.7 persons per household. It may be expected that this development would occur at a quicker pace with construction of the station at Wickford Junction than without station construction. Although the town planning staff does not know the specific square footage of commercial development potential at Wickford Junction (outside of the planned phased development at Wickford Junction Plaza), it is anticipated that employment opportunities would increase in the immediate area based on availability of commercial retail and office space land adjacent to the site and within the Route 4/Route 102 interchange area. The North Kingstown Comprehensive Plan encourages development to occur in existing commercial districts and has identified this area for additional development, as supported by a recent business survey.<sup>16</sup> Much of the utility infrastructure at Wickford Junction already exists and new development is limited by land availability and environmental

<sup>15</sup> *Town of North Kingstown, RI. Comprehensive Plan. Five-Year Update.* Approved June 13, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> *Town of North Kingstown, RI. Comprehensive Plan. Five-Year Update.* Approved June 13, 2002.

sensitivity.<sup>17</sup> The Wickford Junction Station location within the existing commercial center is a measure supported by the Town of North Kingstown to control secondary growth and commercial development east of the rail line.

The presence of public transportation may attract people to settle near the station area, however it is important to note that this growth will occur regardless of the availability of public transit. In general, when the economic growth potential of an area is low, the growth inducing impact of the transit facility will be low and when the potential is high, the growth inducements will be higher through the multiplier effect.

The MBTA is currently completing environmental documentation under the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act for the extension of commuter rail from Boston to Fall River and New Bedford. As part of the scoping process for the supplemental draft environmental impact report, the Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) requested that a Task Force be formed to assist communities deal in a coordinated fashion with the environmental and growth impacts of the commuter rail extension project. Area concerns are two-fold: some communities are anxious to capitalize on economic development (specifically station area planning for transit oriented development) and others are concerned with protecting community character (especially in more rural areas).

Two monthly meetings of the Fall River - New Bedford Commuter Rail Growth Management Task Force had been convened by April 15, 2002. Task force members include representatives of 15 communities within the area of influence (ridership areas) with representation from regional agencies and chambers of commerce. The task force adopted a work scope on March 6, 2002. No findings/recommendations have been generated to date. The role of the Growth Management Task Force is to:

1. Analyze potential growth impacts and development opportunities of the commuter rail line;
2. Prepare generic tools that communities can use to develop growth planning guidelines for their city or town;
3. Develop site specific planning and land use development guidance as well as economic development strategies (e.g., tax increment financing and economic target area incentives) for the areas immediately surrounding the stations to encourage transit oriented development and fully integrate the rail line into the communities; and
4. Represent local officials at task force meetings.

RIDOT will continue to monitor the progress and findings of the Fall River - New Bedford Commuter Rail Growth Management Task Force. As information becomes available, RIDOT will share documentation with other state agencies, the Statewide Planning Program, and the Towns of North Kingstown and Exeter.

### **3.2 Park and Recreation Area Impacts**

Several park and recreation areas are located in the vicinity of the proposed station at Wickford Junction or along the NEC between the proposed station and the Davisville Interlocking:

- Ryan Park - An unmarked entrance, located approximately 700 feet south of the proposed Wickford Junction Station on Route 102, is on the site of the former Wickford Train Station. The linear path is part of a 29.5-acre parcel identified in the SCORP report as Feurer Park.<sup>18</sup>
- Cocumscussoc Park - An undeveloped 367-acre state park with access on Post Road and Stoney Lane, is located east of the NEC and includes wetlands associated with Cocumscussoc Brook.<sup>19</sup> The west border of this park is located at least 2000 feet from the NEC.

<sup>17</sup> Town Planning Department Phone Interview, February 11, 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Ocean State Outdoors, Addendum 1 to the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 1986-1991 (Report NO. 52A, State Guide Plan Element 152).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*

- Stoney Lane School - Ballfields abut the NEC adjacent to the Stoney Lane underpass under the rail line.<sup>20</sup>
- Woodland Golf Course - The closest point is a 56.6-acre privately-owned parcel within 1000 feet of the NEC.<sup>21</sup> The property is west of the rail line and west of Old Baptist Road along the East Greenwich line.
- Hunt River Swamp - Portions of the privately owned parcel (28.5 acres in North Kingstown and 17.3 acres in East Greenwich) are located 1500 feet west of the NEC and Old Baptist Road.<sup>22</sup> See Section 3.11, water quality.

Neither Ryan Park nor the ballfields at Belleville Pond will be affected by the South County Commuter Rail project. Neither construction nor operation of commuter rail service will affect Cocumscussoc Park, Woodland Golf Course, or recreational use of Hunt River Swamp.

### 3.3 Farmland Impacts

No land in the project area is actively farmed. The primary soil found on the project site is Quonset gravelly sandy loam.<sup>23</sup> This excessively drained soil is on terraces, outwash plains, kames, and eskers with slopes ranging from 3 to 15 percent. The permeability of this soil is moderately rapid in the surface layer and subsoil and very rapid in the substratum. Available water capacity is low and runoff is slow. This soil is suitable for community development. Landscaping requires watering in summers. The NRCS identifies Quonset gravelly sandy loam as “additional farmland of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forge, and oilseed crops.”<sup>24</sup> For the land to qualify as an area of Important Farmland, the land must be available for agricultural use. Since the land on the site is not available for agricultural use, it does not qualify as an Important Farmland of Rhode Island. The Town of North Kingstown is actively purchasing the rights to important farmland designated within the town.

### 3.4 Social Impacts/Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations* was published in the Federal Register, Vol. 59, No.32 on February 16, 1994. The Executive Order requires each Federal Agency to take the appropriate steps to identify and avoid any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of Federal programs, policies and activities on minority and low-income populations.

As indicated by the North Kingstown town planner, enough information is not available to designate Wickford Junction as low and moderate income, although it is expected that low and moderate-income households exist. North Kingstown has the highest percentage of affordable housing in Washington County. The Town includes 802 units of permanently affordable housing, representing 9% of the entire housing stock.<sup>25</sup> The population in proximity of Wickford Junction (Census Tract 50301) is neither minority nor low income. Racial or ethnic minorities represent 2.5% of this tract. Although 2000 income data is not yet available, 1990 census data does not indicate a minority or low-income concentration. It is not expected that 2000 US Census data will reflect significant changes in income. Median household income for Census Tract 50301 was \$46,458 (above the state

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>23</sup> US Department of Agriculture (USDA) *Soil Survey of Rhode Island*, 1981 by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS)

<sup>24</sup> Natural Resources Conservation Service, “Important Farmlands of Rhode Island” March, 1992.

<sup>25</sup> Town of North Kingstown, RI Comprehensive Plan. 5-Year Update. Approved June 13, 2002.

median of \$32,181 and town median of \$40,419).<sup>26</sup> Thirty-four families living within Census Tract 50301 were considered below poverty with children under 18, although none are within Block Group 503011.<sup>27</sup>

The census tract representing Davisville (Census Tract 50102) has a higher percentage of racial or ethnic minorities (3.7%) than the tract in the vicinity of the proposed station at Wickford Junction.<sup>28</sup> Median household income for Census Tract 50102 was \$36,477 (above the state median of \$32,181 but below the town median of \$40,419).<sup>29</sup> The Town of North Kingstown's recent Affordable Housing Plan indicates that a neighborhood north of the Davisville Switch incorporates 51% low and moderate income households. The Town has recently completed the Davisville Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, addressing a revitalization strategy for this neighborhood. This area is not within the project area. The proposed project is not anticipated to have an adverse impact on minority and low-income populations.

### **3.5 Relocation Impacts**

No residential property owner relocations are anticipated at this time based on the current proposed Wickford Junction Commuter Rail Station layout. If additional parcels are required, all property acquisitions would be conducted in accordance with RIDOT and FTA practices. Property purchased for the proposed construction would be compensated by the RIDOT at the fair market value and any necessary relocation cost will be in accordance with the Uniform Relocation and Assistance Policies Act of 1970.

### **3.6 Economic Impacts and Joint Development**

The proposed location of the Wickford Junction Station is supported by the Town of North Kingstown's development plan. Locating the Wickford Junction Station at Wickford Junction Plaza will economically benefit the Town of North Kingstown, the village of Wickford, and establishments within the plaza. Commuters may make the plaza their one location to stop for work travel and for household and personal shopping needs.

Wickford Junction Associates' comprehensive plan for phased development of this site incorporates retail, office, commercial, and train station components. The commuter rail station has support of the developer for joint development opportunities. The private owners of Wickford Junction Plaza have expressed interest in developing a public/private partnership for operation of a parking facility at the station. Future action would provide an opportunity to work closely with these owners to identify means to advance the objectives of the commuter rail project while maximizing private development potential of the site. Any public/private partnerships would reflect the requirements and restrictions of federal funding for intermodal transportation projects.

Meadows Professional Business Park, located at 1130 Ten Rod Road, includes six two- to three-story buildings with approximately 55 businesses. This business park is located within a half mile of the proposed station, on the south side of Route 102. The commuter rail station offers an alternative means of access to employment opportunities at the business park and other local businesses.

### **3.7 Pedestrian and Bicycle Movement and Bus Access**

Route 102 sidewalks extend east from the Wickford Junction Plaza on the north side of the road only. This sidewalk extends under the Route 102 underpass beneath the rail line. Limited sections of sidewalk are provided to

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<sup>26</sup> US Census Bureau. 1990 Census Lookup. [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation. North Kingstown, RI 1990 Census Summary. [www.riedc.com](http://www.riedc.com).

<sup>27</sup> US Census Bureau 1990 Census Lookup.

<sup>28</sup> US Census Bureau 1990 Census Lookup

<sup>29</sup> US Census Bureau 1990 Census Lookup

the west. Although paths are worn along the south side of the roadway, there are no paved sidewalks in the project area. Pedestrian access to the station is via limited paved sidewalks along Route 102 and through the internal circulation within Wickford Junction Plaza. The master plan prepared by the developer for Wickford Junction Plaza promotes pedestrian and bicycle traffic between commercial buildings in an effort to develop a village community atmosphere. Sidewalks for pedestrian use are provided throughout the commercial development. The proposed station access road will include five-foot wide sidewalks and street lighting. Benches will be provided for pedestrian use. Site amenities such as fencing, lighting and landscaping will be geared to a pedestrian scale.

All crosswalks, sidewalks, and wheelchair ramps proposed within the station site will meet ADA requirements. The 1,000 car multi-level parking garage will include ADA accessible spaces. Elevators and ramps leading to platforms will be provided as well. All boardings and arrivals from the station will be made via a rail siding adjacent to the station platform on the west side of the tracks. A pedestrian bridge will not be required over the tracks. A high-level platform will assure ADA-accessibility from the platform to the train.

Bicyclists who desire to travel to or from the station may either choose to ride on local roadways such as Route 102 or ride on Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) buses which are equipped with bicycle racks between the months of April and October. The *Guide to Cycling in the Ocean Station* indicates that Route 102, Ten Rod Road is a “suitable” bike route, thereby providing an alternate means of access to the station from both Wickford and Exeter. Wickford Junction Station will also easily be accessible via RIDOT’s proposed 2.5-mile Wickford Junction spur trail, providing access to Wickford via an off-road route on a former rail line. This project is currently in the study and development phase. Travel lanes throughout Wickford Junction Plaza are of sufficient width to provide access for bicycles. Bike lockers and racks will be installed at the station for bicyclist use and bicycle safe grates will be used on all drainage structures.

Although RIPTA bus service is not currently available on Route 102 in the project area, RIPTA would coordinate with RIDOT and the MBTA to set up an appropriate service model to feed the train station. Due to fiscal constraints and low residential density in the ridership area, bus service to the station would likely be considered to augment an existing core of passengers to another in-town destination. Although feeder bus service would improve access for the transit-dependent, it is recognized that increasing the number of modes per trip discourages high occupancy vehicle use by increasing travel and transfer time. RIPTA Bus #66 with express service from the University of Rhode Island to Providence stops at the Park-n-Ride lot at Route 2 and Route 102, less than a half mile west of the proposed train station. Four trips northbound depart between 7:01 and 8:11 AM with five trips arriving southbound between 4:44 and 6:44 PM. Midday service is also offered. RIPTA bus service to the Park-n-Ride would complement commuter rail service, providing increased flexibility for commuters especially those requiring service during the day. RIPTA Bus #14 is routed on Brown Street in Wickford, several miles east of the proposed station and therefore would not provide acceptable service to the proposed station.

### **3.8 Air Quality Impacts**

Potential air quality impacts could be generated by operation of diesel engines for commuter rail trains and by an increase in the vehicle traffic. Air quality impacts of commuter rail operations have been previously addressed in the NECIP FEIS. This analysis included 24 daily commuter trains in addition to Amtrak and freight train operations. As indicated in Section 2.2, SCCR service includes eight daily commuter trains. The air quality analysis for the commuter train trips being considered for the SCCR service has therefore been completed under the

NECIP FEIS and is still valid. Any mitigation, if required, was previously included in the NECIP Record of Decision<sup>30</sup> and therefore no significant air quality impact will result from commuter rail operation.

Assessment of air quality impacts related to station operation is therefore limited to the impact of vehicular traffic on the local roadway network. Of the eight trains potentially scheduled, only one will arrive or depart during AM or PM peak hours, as indicated in Section 3.10. Air quality modeling has been conducted to determine if increased traffic volumes during the peak AM period (when one train is scheduled for departure) would adversely affect ambient air quality.

Of the three primary automobile-related pollutants, only carbon monoxide (CO) is a potential problem at the local level. The other two, hydrocarbons and nitric oxide are regional pollutants because they contribute to the formation of ozone which is created and transported on a regional scale. Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas associated with the incomplete combustion of fuels. The principal source of carbon monoxide (CO) is vehicular emissions. Carbon monoxide concentrations could vary greatly over relatively short distances and elevated levels are concentrated near crowded intersections and along slow-moving, heavily traveled roadways. Therefore, it is important to predict CO concentrations on a local or microscale basis. National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) established for CO are presented in Table 3-2.

**TABLE 3-2**

**Peak 1- and 8-Hour CO Concentrations (ppm), 2020, and National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)**

| Intersection                         | Time Period | NAAQS 1-Hour | 2020 Build 1-Hour | NAAQS 8-Hour | 2020 Build 8-Hour |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Route 102 at Route 4 Southbound Ramp | AM          | 35           | 3.8               | 9            | 2.2               |

Source: Edwards and Kelcey

The worst-case traffic scenario would be expected to have the most negative air quality impact. A CO air quality analysis was therefore conducted for the worst-case traffic condition for the project, the 2020 AM Build condition at the Route 102 / Route 4 southbound ramps intersection. As indicated in Section 3.10, this intersection would experience LOS D under either the build or no-build scenario, with the poorest level of service and highest traffic volume of any intersection in the project area. Under this worst case condition, the analysis shows that there would be minimal increases in CO at receptors in the area, yet these increases would be well below the NAAQS.

Although no improvements are warranted at this time, sufficient right of way is available within the Route 102 median to provide adequate storage space for left turn movements at this critical intersection when the demand exists.

Because LOS C or better is existing or projected for the years 2002, 2006 and 2014 (see Section 3.10) at all remaining intersections in the project area, air quality impacts at these intersections would also be minimal. RIDOT improvements planned at Route 102 intersections at Route 1 and Old Baptist Road must be completed to assure that LOS C would result in future years. These improvements are described in Section 3.10. EPA guidance states that intersections with LOS C would not cause violations of the NAAQS, therefore, intersections in the project area that experience or are expected to experience LOS C or better were not analyzed.

<sup>30</sup> US Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration, Northeast Corridor Improvement Project Electrification, Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report and Section 4(f) Statement, New Haven, CT to Boston MA. Final Report, October 1994. Record of Decision Final Report, May 1995.

The results from level 1 microscale analysis using CAL3QHC model are summarized in Table 3-2. Modeled results of peak one-hour and eight-hour concentrations of CO are provided for the emission critical year of 2020. Projections are presented for the 2020 AM Build scenario, the condition at which the Route 102 / Route 4 southbound ramp intersection would experience LOS D. The results below are for a receptor on the south side of Route 102, near the Route 4 overpass. This receptor is expected to experience the highest CO levels of any receptor in the study area. As indicated in Table 3-2, air quality impacts related to increased vehicular traffic volume on local station-area roadways are below federal standards. No significant air quality impact will result from operation of commuter rail service on the NEC or from increased vehicular traffic at the proposed Wickford Junction Station.

### 3.9 Noise and Vibration Impacts

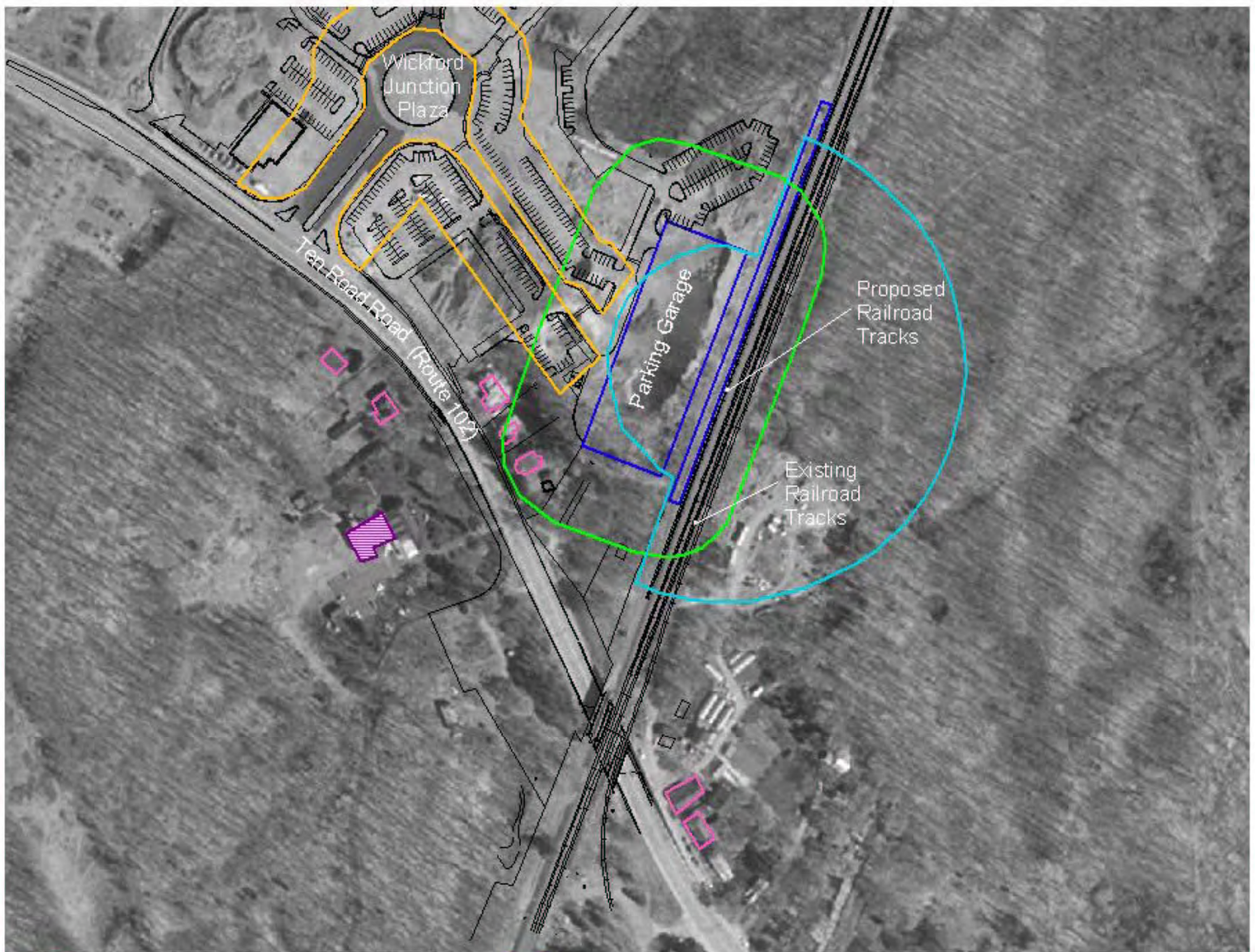
Noise impacts associated with construction/operation of a train station and operation of commuter rail service typically include impacts associated with station construction, noise associated with increased vehicular traffic at the station, and noise and vibration associated with operation of locomotive-hauled passenger cars on the rail line itself. Operation noise and vibration impacts along the corridor have been addressed in previous studies, as indicated in Section 1. Noise impact assessment for the SCCR is therefore limited to station construction and operation noise, including that generated by vehicular traffic volume.

**Station Construction** Construction of the rail siding, platforms, parking structure, and site improvements at the Wickford Junction Station will increase ambient noise levels for a limited time. It is estimated that station improvements will be completed within 12 months and will be similar to noise associated with construction of Wickford Junction Plaza and other new development on the Route 102 corridor. Typical noises generated include equipment movement for clearing and grading the site (bulldozer and dump truck operation), installation of foundations for the parking garage and station platforms (possible pile driving), and superstructure construction (cement trucks or precast concrete delivery).

**Station Operation** Operation of the station will increase traffic volumes on Route 102 in the vicinity of Wickford Junction Plaza (see section 3.11, Traffic). Noise generated by this traffic volume would be reflected in increased noise in the immediate area. Increased traffic volumes will closely approximate the scheduled arrival and departure of commuter service. As indicated in Section 3.11, station hours are before the regular AM peak period (7 to 8 AM) and after the regular PM peak period (4 to 5 PM) for Route 102.

Methodology outlined in *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*<sup>31</sup> has been utilized as part of the environmental review process to determine the presence of noise sensitive receptors or land uses within a defined area of project noise influence. Figure 3-2 indicates land uses within the screening distances. Of the three homes on Ten Rod Road adjacent to the proposed parking garage and Staples, two are located within the parking garage screening distance. Residential land use is identified as Land Use Category 2 by FTA and includes homes, hospitals and hotels where a nighttime sensitivity to noise is assumed to be of utmost importance. Noise monitoring was performed at the rear property line of the property closest to the proposed garage during the AM and PM commuter peak (7:00 AM and 4:00 PM) and train peak (6:30 AM and 7:00 PM). The sound levels were the same during both train peaks, 55 dBA, and were slightly lower than the sound levels monitored during the commuter peaks (60 dBA in the AM and 58 dBA in the PM).

<sup>31</sup> Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment, Final Report April 1995, Harris Miller Miller & Hanson Inc. for Office of Planning Federal Transit Administration



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Nursing Home   |  Access Roads - 100 Feet   |
|  Residences   |  Parking Garage - 150 Feet |
|  Commuter Rail Station - 450 Feet<br>(225 Feet with intervening building) |   |



Figure 3 - 2  
**Wickford Junction Station  
Noise Screening Distances**

Scale: 1"=313'



According to the FTA criteria, portions of each of the three neighboring properties would be impacted by the project garage, and the rear yard of the closest property would be severely impacted. Using TNM, a barrier was modeled to mitigate the increase in sound levels at the adjacent residences. This barrier would be constructed as enclosed portions of the parking garage. The barrier worked most efficiently at an approximate length of 120 feet on the north side, and 27 feet on the west side.

The sound levels of MBTA locomotives were reviewed to analyze the potential impact upon the adjacent residences from the idling trains associated with the turnaround at the Wickford Junction Station. To evaluate the noise exposure the dwell time is broken down between nighttime hours (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.) and daytime hours (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.), and a 10 dBA penalty is added to project sound levels that occur during the nighttime period. During the nighttime period 30 minutes of dwell time is expected, with the remaining 75 minutes occurring during the daytime. The average hourly sound level of the idling locomotives during the nighttime was calculated to be 48.5 dBA, and during the daytime was calculated to be 50.2 dBA. The calculated  $L_{dn}$  (average day-night sound level which incorporates the 10 dBA penalty for nighttime activity) is 55 dBA at the closest residence.

| Noise Impact Assessment of Project                      | Residence 3  | Residence 2  | Residence 1  |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Distance to Track                                       | 280 feet     | 320 feet     | 380 feet     |
| Existing Sound Level ( $L_{dn}$ )                       | 60 dBA       | 60 dBA       | 60 dBA       |
| Sound Level of Parking Garage w/Mitigation ( $L_{dn}$ ) | 44 to 51 dBA | 44 to 52 dBA | 48 to 54 dBA |
| Sound Level of Idling Locomotives ( $L_{dn}$ )          | 55 dBA       | 54 dBA       | 53 dBA       |
| Total Project Sound Level ( $L_{dn}$ )                  | 55 to 56 dBA | 54 to 56 dBA | 54 to 57 dBA |
| Total Sound Level ( $L_{dn}$ )                          | 61 to 62 dBA | 61 dBA       | 61 to 62 dBA |
| Increase over Existing Sound Level                      | 1 to 2 dBA   | 1 dBA        | 1 to 2 dBA   |

Given the existing sound level ( $L_{dn}$ ) of 60 dBA, the project is allowed a total sound level of 57 dBA for any new noise generated by the project under FTA criteria. As shown in the table above, the project does not exceed that value, with total project sound levels ranging between 54 and 57 dBA, increases ranging between 1 and 2 dBA, and total sound levels ranging between 61 and 62 dBA. Therefore, according to the FTA criteria, the project would not cause any noise impacts.

### 3.10 Traffic Impacts

**Existing Conditions** A traffic study, conducted to assess the impact of vehicle traffic generated by the proposed station at Wickford Junction Plaza, is available on file at the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Providence, in Room 372.<sup>32</sup> Traffic operations at six intersections along the Route 102 corridor from U.S. Route 1 on the east to the Route 4 interchange southbound on-ramp to the west were considered. The Route 102 corridor within the study area is an east-west 4-lane arterial that provides access from the Route 4 interchange east to Wickford Junction Plaza and the proposed station. The remainder of Route 102 is an east-west 2-lane arterial that serves the Town of Exeter to the west, and Wickford Village to the east. Route 4 is a limited access arterial

<sup>32</sup> *Traffic Study - Proposed Wickford Train Station, Route 102, North Kingstown, Rhode Island.* Prepared by Edwards and Kelcey for the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, March 2002.

highway with a partial cloverleaf interchange at Route 102 within the study area. Route 2 is a north-south arterial road that forms an intersection at the Route 102 and Route 4 northbound off ramp intersection, and extends northerly away from the intersection towards East Greenwich. Route 1 is a north-south arterial road that passes along the eastern perimeter of the study area two miles to the east of Wickford Junction.

Of the six key intersections in the study area, four are signalized and two are unsignalized: Route 102 / Home Depot / Fiddlesticks, Route 102 / Route 2 / Route 4 Northbound off ramp, Route 102 / Wickford Junction Plaza, Route 102 / Route 1, Route 102 / Route 4 Southbound On Ramp (yield), and Route 102 / Old Baptist Road (stop sign).

**Traffic Analysis Assumptions** The traffic analysis was completed for base year 2002 and future year no build (without train station) and build (with train station) for 2006, 2014, and 2020. It is assumed that RIDOT will complete its proposed intersection improvement project at the Route 102 / Old Baptist Road intersection and that signals will be operational by 2006. It is also assumed that RIDOT will upgrade the Route 102 / Route 1 intersection with road striping and signal timing adjustments. Project traffic volumes were collected from RIDOT for three of the intersections, and three new counts were completed in January 2002. RIDOT 1998 counts were adjusted to 2002 based on a RIDOT annual background growth rate for North Kingstown of 1.73%. Traffic volumes at Route 102 / Home Depot does not include Fiddlesticks Center traffic because this is a seasonal operation. It is assumed that the Fiddlesticks peak hour volumes will occur outside the peak hour and not significantly impact operations at this intersection.

Traffic analysis for all scenarios indicates all intersections operate at LOS C or better now and in the future with two exceptions. The Route 1 / Route 102 intersection operations begin to fail by the 2006 no build scenario. However, this is a no build condition and not due to train station traffic growth impacts. Table 3-3 indicates the LOS changes for this intersection under each scenario.

The other location with operations below LOS C is the Route 102 / Route 4 Southbound on ramp. The westbound left turn from Route 102 to Route 4 southbound on ramp will become LOS D during the 2020 no build AM and PM peak hours.

**Table 3-3**  
**Level of Service**

|                | ROUTE 102 AT ROUTE 1 (SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION) |          |       |          |       |          |       |
|----------------|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|
|                | 2002   | 2006     |       | 2014     |       | 2020     |       |
|                | Existing                                       | No Build | Build | No Build | Build | No Build | Build |
| <b>AM Peak</b> | B  | C        | C     | C        | C     | D        | D     |
| <b>PM Peak</b> | C  | E        | *     | F        | *     | F        | *     |

\*Not calculated for build because proposed train schedule will be outside normal PM Peak hour (4-5PM).

**Mitigation / Intersection Improvements By Others** RIDOT Traffic Engineering is planning two intersection upgrade projects for the Route 102 corridor. Route 102 / Old Baptist Road intersection has been approved for the installation of a new traffic signal by the State Traffic Commission and awaits further action. The Route 102 / Route 1 intersection will be improved with road striping and signal timing adjustments to effectively separate traffic movements at the intersection. However, this project will not improve overall capacity and delay due to

geometric constraints on the intersection. The Route 1 southbound approach cannot be modified due to right of way issues and proximity to historic property. Therefore, delay for this approach remains high under future analysis. This project is currently at the 30% design phase.

### 3.11 Water Quality Impacts

The proposed Wickford Junction Station is located above the Hunt, Annaquatucket, and Pettaquamsett sole source aquifer with groundwater classified as GAA by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). GAA classification includes recharge areas for aquifer and wellhead protection areas and as such is suitable for public drinking water use without treatment. This classification includes the critical portions of the recharge areas to the significant stratified drift aquifers and wellhead protection areas for community water supply wells. The project site is also located within a Town of North Kingstown groundwater overlay district.

The intent of the groundwater recharge overlay zone is to: “(1) Protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public; (2) Protect the public drinking supply in North Kingstown from the effects of high intensity land development and from potentially hazardous materials associated with specific land uses; (3) Protect, preserve, and maintain the quality and quantity of the groundwater supply; and (4) Permit the use of land within the groundwater protection zones for agricultural purposes and encourage the use of farm land in a manner which is consistent with the protection of groundwater resources.”<sup>33</sup>

The storm water management system proposed for the subject project will be a closed system connected to the system constructed and in place for the Wickford Junction Plaza. No fuel storage or transfer is proposed at this site. No groundwater infiltration units will be proposed for use. Review of the calculations for the Plaza’s system, prepared by Mark W. Hutchins & Associates, Inc., revised through September, 1995, indicate that the development of the subject property as a commuter rail facility was taken into account when sizing pipes and associated detention facilities. The existing system is a closed system involving the use of catch basins with sumps and a network of reinforced concrete pipes which collect and direct storm water runoff to several extended detention basins located along the northerly, easterly, and westerly portions of the plaza site. Again, according to design calculations, these basins were designed to control peak flow rates and meet water quality standards as mandated by RIDEM. As stated in the referenced calculations, “There are no negatively predicated impacts on water quality...by implementing extended detention basins...”.

The expansion of the existing storm water management system will be subject to the review and approval of RIDEM and the Town of North Kingstown. All applicable guidelines for protecting ground water and surface water quality will be followed in the design of the commuter rail station. It is anticipated that there will be no impact to surface or ground water quality from the proposed project.

### 3.12 Permits

Ownership of the Wickford Junction train station property has not been determined. State ownership or leasing of the private property are both viable options that need to be fully explored. Should the property be leased for the train station, plan approvals and building permits would be secured from both the State Building Commission and the Town of North Kingstown. Coordination with other North Kingstown officials, including the Fire Department, will occur as needed during the permitting process. A Preliminary Determination will be required for discharge of stormwater in accordance with RIDEM’s Freshwater Wetlands Act.

<sup>33</sup> Town of North Kingstown, RI. Zoning Ordinance. As amended 7/10/00.

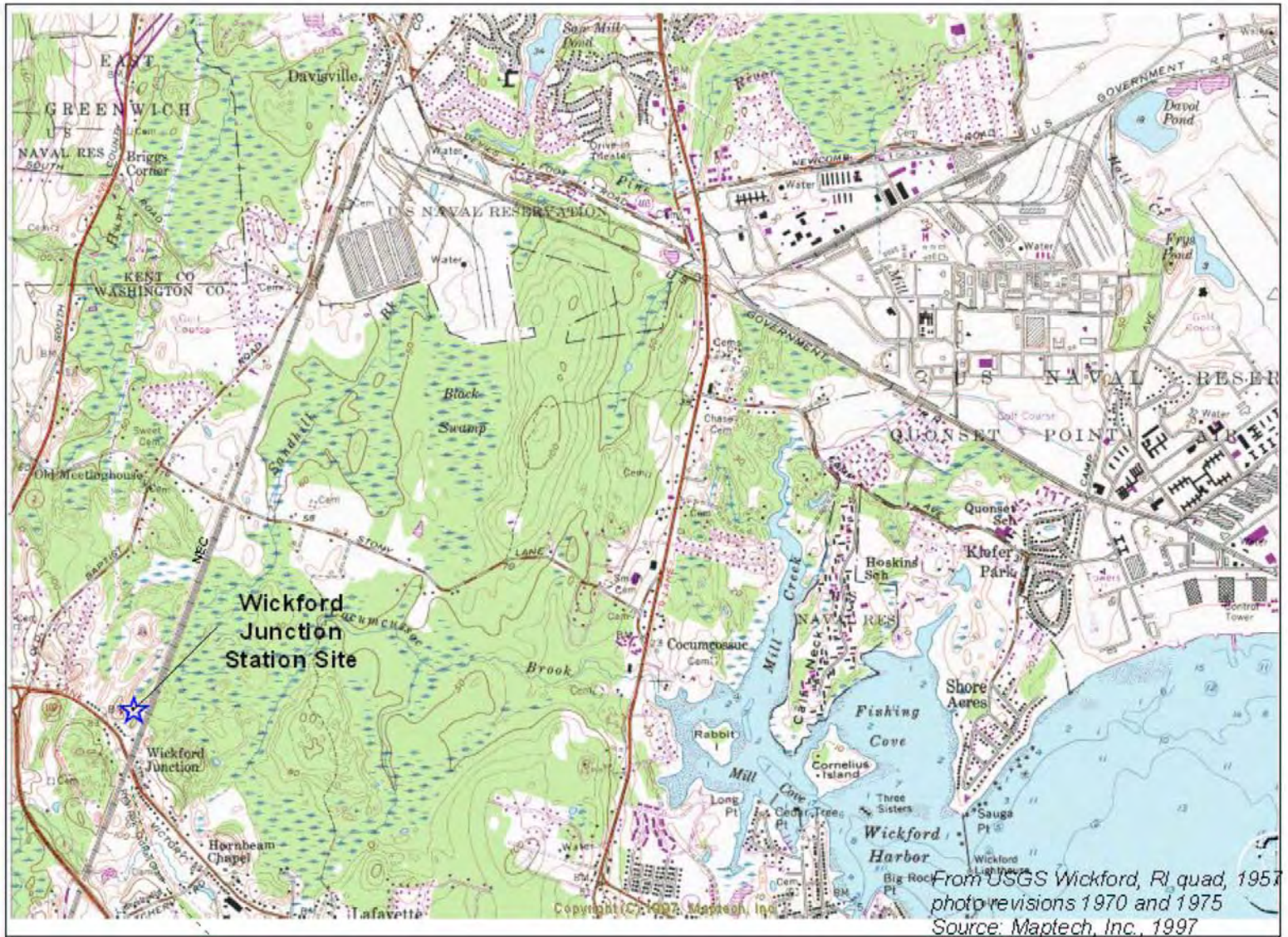
### **3.13 Wetlands Impacts**

Extensive wetland areas are located north of the proposed station site, as indicated in Figure 3-3 (USGS maps). Wetlands are present between Route 102 and Stoney Lane. Through these wetlands Cocumcossuc Brook flows south into Mill Cove proceeding into Wickford Harbor. North of Stoney Lane Sandhill Brook flows north through the U.S. Navel Reservation at Davisville to Saw Mill Pond. Black River Swamp is just east of Sandhill Brook. US Geological Survey (USGS) topographic survey maps, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Soils Survey, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), Town of North Kingstown Assessor Maps, development plans for Wickford Junction Plaza, and field investigations by a wetlands biologist were used to determine if wetlands were present at the proposed Wickford Junction station. The USGS map (Wickford Quadrangle) for North Kingstown indicates that wetlands may be found on site abutting the proposed alternative.

All stormwater from the station site will be discharged to an extended detention basin previously constructed as part of the Wickford Junction Plaza site improvements (see Section 3.11). Pretreated overflow from this basin discharges to the wetland. Proposed station construction activities are located a minimum of 70 feet from any buffer zones associated with any regulated resources area subject to jurisdiction under the Rhode Island Freshwater Wetlands Act. Therefore, there are no impacts to wetland features anticipated from the proposed project. However, due to the location of the project's storm water outfalls, it is likely that a RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands permit will be required. It is anticipated that there will be no significant impacts to wetland resources through discharge of storm water from the proposed site.

### **3.14 Water Body Modification and Wildlife Impacts**

No waterbody will be altered during the construction of the Wickford Junction Station or the track improvements. Quonset gravelly sandy loam soil located at the Wickford Junction Station site is suited to woodland wildlife habitat and openland wildlife habitat but is too dry to provide wetland wildlife habitat. The soils along the tracks are suitable for either woodland wildlife habitat, openland wildlife habitat, and/or wetland wildlife habitat.



★ Proposed Train Station



Figure 3-3  
**Wickford Junction to Davisville  
Topographic Map**

Scale: 1"=3,000'



### **3.15 Floodplain**

The proposed Wickford Junction station site was found on the FIRM for the Town of North Kingstown.<sup>34</sup> A review of the map indicated that the project site is located in Zone C, described as areas of minimal flooding. Plans for the Wickford Junction Plaza development, approved by the Town of North Kingstown and RIDEM, indicated a calculated 100-year flood plain elevation of 58.4. All work for the proposed commuter rail station will be above and outside that elevation. As a result, no grading or filling will take place within the 100-year flood plain.

### **3.16 Wild and Scenic Rivers**

There are no wild or scenic rivers located within Rhode Island according to the U.S. Geological Survey, a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

### **3.17 Coastal Zone Impacts**

No areas are subject to Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC) jurisdiction on, adjacent to or within 200 feet of the Wickford Junction Commuter Rail Station Site. The Freshwater Wetland Jurisdiction Boundary Maps for North Kingstown, Rhode Island were reviewed to confirm this. Therefore the project will have no impact on any coastal zones regulated by the CRMC.

### **3.18 Threatened and Endangered Species**

Correspondence with RIDEM Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program dated April 24, 1998 states that there are no rare or endangered species or exemplary natural communities with the Wickford Junction Station Site.

Correspondence with US Fish and Wildlife Service dated May 24, 2002 indicates that no federally-listed or proposed, threatened or endangered species under the jurisdiction of the US Fish and Wildlife Service are known to occur in the project area.

### **3.19 Historic and Archaeological Preservation**

The Wickford Junction Commuter Rail Station Site has been reviewed by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) and it was determined that the property under consideration does not contain any historical buildings or sites that are listed on or are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The site does fall within the traditional homelands of the Narragansett Indian Tribe and there are a number of significant archaeological sites nearby. RIHPHC has determined that the potential for archaeological resources on the subject property is directly connected to the extent to which it has been disturbed. They have concluded in a prior review of the property that any sites that may have existed were destroyed by gravel excavation and that no archaeological sites remain in the project area. Correspondence from RIHPHC provided in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act dated August 23, 2002, September 8, 1998 and April 23, 1998 is presented in the Appendix.

### **3.20 Hazardous Waste Sites**

In Rhode Island, hazardous waste sites are regulated by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). RIDEM Division of Waste Management manages these acts. A review of these records was completed on October 4, 2001 and no documents on file indicated the presence of any hazardous waste sites of record on the subject properties.

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<sup>34</sup> US Federal Emergency Management Administration, Flood Insurance Rate Map, Town of North Kingstown, Washington County, Rhode Island, Community Panel Number 445404 0008 B, revised February 16, 1983.

### **3.21 Visual Impacts**

The proposed location of the Wickford Junction Station is currently used as a construction storage site with visible stockpiles of construction debris and materials. The site is adjacent to developed areas of the Wickford Junction Plaza; site improvements include parking lots, roadways, and the extended detention basins. The site was previously used for gravel operations. No evidence remains of past gravel removal operation or of remnants of forested areas.

The existing topography of abutting properties to the south and west along Ten Rod Road and that of the rail line to the east, is approximately 8 to 12 feet above the base elevation of the Wickford Junction facility site. This grade differential would reduce the amount of excavation required for the construction of the multi-level garage facility by allowing for construction of a portion of the structure to be “hidden” in the embankment. The garage would also be located approximately 175 feet east of the center of Ten Rod Road and approximately 80 feet from the rear of any residential home.

With the construction of the facility, the existing construction stockpiles and debris will be removed from the site. A combination of proposed grading, loam, seed and landscape plantings, existing trees and other dense vegetation, would provide a visual screen of the facility for the surrounding area outside of the Plaza. Internal to the Plaza, the parking facility, designed with a similar architectural style of the other building within the Plaza, would appear as an integral part of the Plaza’s traffic flow and retail uses. It would blend into the village type setting envisioned for the site. As a result, the proposed project would have no negative impact on the site and/or surrounding area.

### **3.22 Energy**

The Wickford Junction Station will improve transit services, encouraging increased transit use and reduced automobile use (including single occupied vehicles, SOVs). Electrification on the NEC would provide an option for power on this route. Although diesel locomotives will provide power for MBTA service, RIDOT will work with MBTA if electrification is proposed in the future. The project is expected to result in reduced transportation-related energy requirements. Building environmental control and lighting systems will be designed to optimize energy conservation and fully comply with the Rhode Island State Building Code.

### **3.23 Construction Impacts**

It is estimated that station improvements will be completed within 12 months and will be similar to impacts associated with construction of Wickford Junction Plaza and other new development on the Route 102 corridor. Typical noises generated include equipment movement for clearing and grading the site (bulldozer and dump truck operation), installation of foundations for the parking garage and station platforms (possible pile driving), and superstructure construction (cement trucks or precast concrete delivery). Sediment control barriers will be installed to minimize the flow of sediment from the construction site to the sedimentation basin or local water bodies.

### **3.24 ADA Access and Public Safety**

Wickford Junction Commuter Rail Station will comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). All crosswalks, sidewalks, and wheelchair ramps proposed within the site will meet ADA requirements. A multi-level parking garage is proposed to be constructed which will provide a thousand (1,000) parking spaces. This will include the appropriate number of ADA accessible spaces. Elevators and ramps leading to platforms will be provided as well.

High-level station platforms will provide at-grade access to the MBTA commuter trains. Ramp systems required to reach the platform elevation will be designed in accordance with ADA requirements. Approach Message System

(TAMS) will be installed to alert customers of approaching trains. Dynamic signage and public address systems will be installed to comply with ADA regulations.

The proposed project will include adequate provisions for safe and secure operations, including fire alarm systems at the train station and parking garage. The project will meet all local code requirements. During construction of the Wickford Junction Station the site will be fenced off in order to deter the public from the potential hazards located at a construction site. Track improvements will be fenced off as well depending on the duration of such improvements.

Access from trains will be to high-level platforms to assure ADA-accessibility. The height of these platforms will discourage crossing the track. Both north- and south-bound trains will stop adjacent to the platform on the west side of the tracks. Trains will not discharge passengers to the east side of the tracks (active rails of the NEC). Pedestrian access from the platforms will be provided to the proposed parking garage, to sidewalks leading to Wickford Junction Plaza (including Wal Mart), and to sidewalks along Ten Rod Road, Route 102. Pedestrian actuation of the Wickford Junction Plaza signal on Route 102 would enhance pedestrian safety for those crossing the road. Pedestrian and bicycle access is also addressed in Section 3.8.

## **SECTION 4 - DISTRIBUTION LIST**

Federal Transit Administration  
Federal Railroad Administration  
Federal Highway Administration  
Army Corps of Engineers  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program  
Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission  
Rhode Island Public Transit Authority  
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management  
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority  
Town of North Kingstown, RI  
Town of Exeter, RI  
Town of East Greenwich, RI  
City of Providence, RI  
City of Warwick, RI  
City of Cranston, RI

## **SECTION 5 - APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A - Documents**

The following documents are available for viewing at the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Intermodal Planning Division, located at Two Capital Hill, Providence, Rhode Island in Room 372:

- Northeast Corridor Improvement Project Electrification – Final Environmental Impact Statement (October 1994), Record of Decision (May 1995)
- Rhode Island Rail Corridor Feasibility Study (November 1994)
- Rhode Island Freight Rail Improvement Project – Final Environmental Impact Statement (May 1998) and Record of Decision (May 1998)
- South County Commuter Rail Operations Plan (July 2001)
- Wickford Junction Commuter Rail Station Site Assessment (December 2001)
- Warwick Intermodal Station Environmental Assessment (May 1999) and Finding of No Significant Impact (July 1999)
- South County Commuter Rail Air Quality Study – Wickford Junction Station, April 2002
- South County Commuter Rail Traffic Study– Wickford Junction Station, May 2002

### **Appendix B - Correspondence**

- Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, August 23, 2002
- US Fish and Wildlife Service, May 24, 2002
- Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, April 23, 1998
- RIDEM Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program, April 24, 1998
- Rhode Island Department of Transportation, September 3, 1998
- Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, September 8, 1998
- Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, March 24, 1995



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

Old State House • 150 Benefit Street • Providence, R.I. 02903-1209

Preservation (401) 222-2678

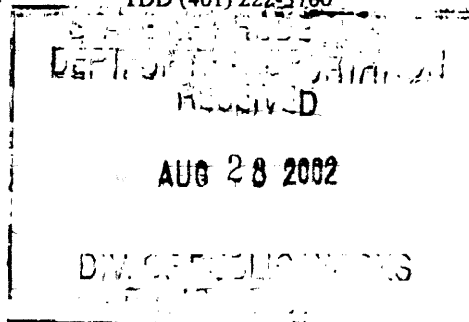
FAX (401) 222-2968

Heritage (401) 222-2669

TDD (401) 222-3700

August 23, 2002

Mr. Edward S. Szymanski  
Chief Transportation Projects Engineer  
Office of Environmental Programs  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
2 Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903



Re: Draft Environmental Assessment  
South County Commuter Rail  
North Kingstown to Providence

Dear Mr. Szymanski:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission has reviewed the draft environmental assessment that has been prepared for the proposed extension of commuter rail service to Wickford Junction. We understand that this service would utilize the existing rail corridor, the Warwick Intermodal Station, which we have reviewed as a separate project, and a new station at Wickford Junction. This assessment has focused on the potential impacts associated with the construction of the Wickford Station with limited track improvement.

As referenced in the main report and Appendix A, the RIHP&HC has previously commented that the Wickford Junction project area on the west side of the rail corridor and the north side of Route 102 has been previously disturbed. Consequently, the proposed development of this site will not affect significant historic properties.

These comments are provided in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Richard E. Greenwood, Project Review Coordinator of this office.

Very truly yours,

Edward P. Sanderson

Executive Director

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Cc: Mike Hebert, RIDOT

(020823.02)



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

New England Field Office  
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-5087



RE: Wickford Junction Plaza  
North Kingstown, Rhode Island

May 24, 2002

Julie L. Duncan  
Edwards and Kelcey  
95 Cedar Street, Suite 101  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Ms. Duncan:

This responds to your April 23, 2002 letter requesting information on the presence of federally-listed and proposed, endangered or threatened species in relation to the proposed construction of a commuter rail station and parking facility at Wickford Junction Plaza in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. Our comments are provided in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).

Based on information currently available to us, no federally-listed or proposed, threatened or endangered species under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are known to occur in the project area. Preparation of a Biological Assessment or further consultation with us under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is not required. Should project plans change, or additional information on listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

Thank you for your cooperation. Please contact me at 603-223-2541 if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Philip A. Morrison  
Wildlife Biologist  
New England Field Office



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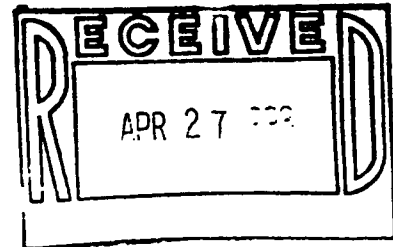
Preservation (401) 222-2678  
Heritage (401) 222-2669

FAX (401) 222-2968  
TDD (401) 222-3700

April 23, 1998

Mr. Keith Bloomer  
Commonwealth Engineers & Consultants  
260 West Exchange Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Operations Plan and Facility Design  
South county Commuter Rail Service



Dear Mr. Bloomer,

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission staff has reviewed the information you have provided on the sites in North Kingstown and Warwick under consideration for commuter rail stations. We have the following comments.

Wickford Junction - The lots under consideration at the four corners of the Ten Rod Road and Northeast Corridor right of way do not contain any historic buildings or sites that are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The project area does fall within the traditional homelands of the Narragansett Indian Tribe and there are a number of significant archaeological sites nearby.

The potential for archaeological resources on these lots is directly connected to the extent to which they have been disturbed. We have concluded in a prior review that on Plat 112, Lot 112 any sites that did exist have been destroyed by gravel excavation. The extent to which ground disturbance has affected the other four lots will need to be established here in order to assess their archaeological sensitivity.

Hillsgrove - A review of our files indicates that the project area contains no historic resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The project area is not considered sensitive for archaeological resources either.

These comments are provided in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Richard E. Greenwood, Project Review Coordinator for this office.

Very truly yours,

Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

cc: Michael Hebert, RIDOT

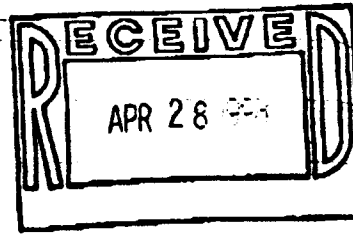
(K5)



**RHODE ISLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908-5767  
Planning & Development  
Phone No. 222-2776  
Fax. No. 222-2069

TDD 401-831-5508



Keith Bloomer  
Commonwealth Engineers and Consultants, Inc.  
260 W. Exchange Street  
Providence, RI 02903

April 24, 1998

RE: Operations Plan and Facility Design  
South County Commuter Rail Service  
RI Contract No. 97102

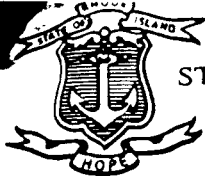
Dear Mr. Bloomer:

Thank you for contacting the RI Natural Heritage Program for information concerning threatened or endangered species on or near sites referenced above, and identified on your locus maps received by this office on March 27, 1998.

I have reviewed the database of the Natural Heritage Program and determined there to be no threatened or endangered species within the vicinity of these two sites. As our inventory is ongoing, more information may become available on these sites in the future. If you have any questions regarding this review, please call me at the number listed above, extension 4308.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Enser, Coordinator  
RI Natural Heritage Program



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

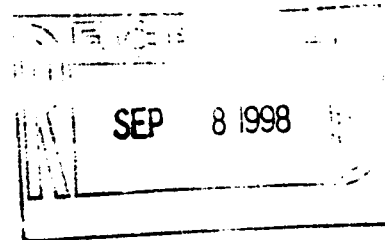
Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
ENGINEERING DIVISION

Two Capitol Hill, Rm. 226

Providence, RI 02903-1124

PHONE 401-222-2023

FAX 401-222-3435; TDD 401-222-4971



September 3, 1998

Mr. Edward F. Sanderson  
Executive Director  
RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission  
Old State House  
150 Benefit Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: Operations Plan and Facilities Design  
South County Commuter Rail Service  
RIC NO. 97102  
FAP NO. SPR-3250(601)

Dear Mr. Sanderson:

Attached, please find a site assessment plan and a copy of North Kingstown Tax Assessor's Plat 100. You may recall that your office has already reviewed two potential commuter rail station sites, one located in the Town of North Kingstown and the other in the City of Warwick, for which you responded in a letter dated April 23, 1998. Lot 14 in conjunction with the adjacent land currently owned by AMTRAK is being considered for the location of the Wickford Junction Commuter Rail Station, but it was inadvertently omitted from the letter of March 23, 1998 sent to you by Commonwealth Engineers and Consultants, Inc..

As with the previously reviewed sites, we request your input as to the sensitivity of this location for of any historic and/or archaeological resources. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Barry Simpson, Historic Preservation Specialist of this office at 222-2023, ext. 4056.

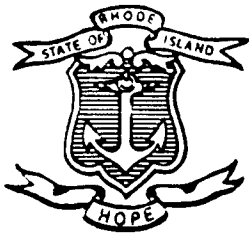
Respectfully,

*Vincent J. Palumbo*  
for: Vincent J. Palumbo, PE  
Principal Civil Engineer  
TRANSPORTATION

VJP/bas

Attachments

cc: Messrs. Parker, Alves, Bennett, Smith, Palumbo, Hebert, Devine; File



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

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Heritage (401) 222-2669

FAX (401) 222-2968  
TDD (401) 222-3700

SEP 10 1998

September 8, 1998

Mr. Vincent Palumbo  
Principal Civil Engineer/Transportation  
Design Section  
2 Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Operations Plan and Facility Design  
South County Commuter Rail Service

Dear Mr. Palumbo:

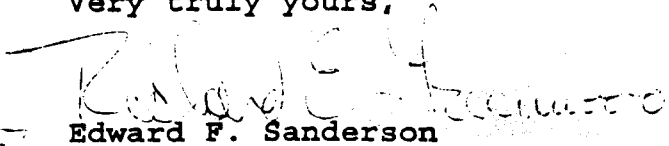
The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission staff has reviewed the information you have provided on Plat 100, Lot 14, an additional site at Wickford Junction that is being studied for the South County Commuter Rail Service project. We have the following comments.

Lot 14 contains no known resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. However it does lie within the traditional homelands of the Narragansett Indian Tribe, and there are a number of significant archaeological sites nearby.

The potential for archaeological resources on this lot depends on the degree of subsurface disturbance which already has occurred here. The extent of ground disturbance will need to be established before the lot's archaeological sensitivity can be assessed adequately.

These comments are provided in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Richard E. Greenwood, Project Review Coordinator for this office.

Very truly yours,

  
Edward F. Sanderson  
Executive Director  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer

cc: Michael Hebert, RIDOT

(YI:2)



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

FDON + 97395661  
14012772968  
IT PRES COMM

NO. 093 P002

14012772968

P-02

CHARLOTTE C.W. TAYLOR  
ARCHAEOLOGIST

OLD STATE HOUSE  
150 BENEFIT STREET  
PROVIDENCE, RI 02903-1209

(401) 277-2678  
FAX: (401) 277-2968  
TDD: (401) 277-3700

AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

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Old State House  
150 Benefit Street  
Providence, R.I. 02903 - 1209

PRESERVATION (401) 277 - 2678 HERITAGE (401) 277 - 2669 FAX (401) 277 - 2968 TDD (401) 277 - 3700

March 24, 1995

Mr. Richard A. Smith, P.E.  
Chief Civil Engineer  
RIDOT

2 Capitol Hill, Rm 231-D  
Providence, RI 02903-1124

Re: Physical Alteration Permit  
Application no. 950307  
Robert Cioe, North Kingstown

Dear Mr. Smith:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission has reviewed the information you provided us on the above-reference project in North Kingstown.

The area just west of this parcel has been the focus of intensive archaeological study relating to Narragansett Indian settlements and cemeteries dating from at least 2,400 years ago through the seventeenth century. A Narragansett Indian cemetery (RI 1000) was located in 1982 on property now known as "Fiddlesticks." In this location 56 burials were identified.

Currently, archaeological investigations are underway at the proposed Walmart site (RI 1581.) These investigations have uncovered significant remains of a Native American settlement and it is predicted that further work will identify the presence of burials on this parcel.

The Cioe parcel itself, or perhaps lands immediately west of the parcel, is known to have contained Native American burials. In the 1950s, gravel operations uncovered five human burials with a wide range of seventeenth-century grave offerings. This site was designated RI 1070.

The Cioe parcel has been heavily and extensively disturbed by gravelling operations. Because of this disturbance it is unlikely that significant archaeological resources remain on the

16:33 RIDOT CONSTRUCTION - 97395661

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NO.093 P003

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14012772968

P.03

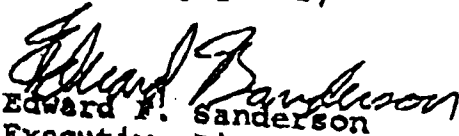
property. We cannot, however, rule out the strong probability that Native American burials still remain on the parcel in areas that have not been excavated to depths greater than four to four and one-half feet. Burials can occur at depths ranging from one to over four feet.

Therefore, in accordance with the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Act, the RIHPHC Procedures, and the Rhode Island Historic Cemeteries Act, a disturbance assesement should be conducted of the parcel. This study should include a walkover and shovel testing to determine areas within the parcel that contain soils that might contain human burials. Following the completion of this assessment study, it may be necessary to machine scrape selected areas to determine the presence of any burials.

In accordance with our Procedures, copies of this letter are sent to the Town of North Kingstown and the Narragansett Indian Tribe.

Please contact Richard Greenwood, Project Review Coordinator, or Dr. Paul Robinson, Principal Archaeologist, of this this office if you have any questions or comments.

Very truly yours,

  
Edward F. Sanderson

Executive Director

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

cc: Marilyn Cohen  
John Brown  
Robert Cioe

**Appendix C – Summary of Environmental Impacts of NEPA Projects****Table C-1****Summary of Environmental Impacts of NEPA Rail Projects (Preferred Alternatives)**

| Environmental Category         | STATION  |   | CORRIDOR   |   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
|                                | Warwick Intermodal Station Environmental Assessment  | Wickford Junction Commuter Rail Station Site Assessment*  | Rhode Island Freight Rail Improvement Project  | Northeast Corridor Improvement Project Electrification – FEIS   |
|                                |  |   | Long Term (Operational)  | Short Term (Construction)   |
| Land Use                       | -Consistent with City-enacted land use plan as part of Redevelopment District<br>-Existing uses: light industrial, misc. commercial, and residential (pg28)  | -Consistent with Comprehensive Plan by specific reference (pg35-36)<br>-Existing uses: commercial, stockpiles, construction, and residential (pg35)   | -Existing uses: industrial, vacant, former naval facilities and office<br>-High density residential development in Warwick, Cranston, Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls (pg4-2)                               | -Existing uses: open, residential, wetlands, commercial, transportation, industrial, agricultural, water, parks and recreational (pg3-3)                  |
| Park and Recreation Areas      | -No public parks or recreational facilities within the project area (pg29)   | -Town park at alternate site  | -No public park or recreation area will be affected (pg4-5)  | -Severe limitations to access recreational facilities (pg4-2)   |
| Farmland                       | -Soils are not suited for agriculture (pg29)   | -No project area land is farmed but the soil is suitable for agriculture (pg26)   | -No protected agricultural resources (pg4-2)   | -Five facilities are located on sites that contain prime or important farmland soil types. None of these sites are currently used for agriculture (pg3-4) |
| Social/ Environmental Justice  | -Increased employment opportunities<br>-Supports City's development plan<br>-Consistent with Environmental Justice objectives (pg29)   |   | -Low-income and minority populations would be affected by some aspects of project construction, the remainder of the project corridor residents would also experience some of the same, if not more, impacts (pg4-5) | -Electromagnetic fields are a concern however the proposed action does not disproportionately affect minority or low income populations (pg3-14, 3-15)    |
| Relocation                     | -Relocation of one business (Budget)<br>-No relocation of housing units (pg31)   | -Three residences (pg15)  | -3 land acquisitions<br>-ROW and utility easements (pg4-3)   | -Construction easements (pg4-4)   |
| Economic and Joint Development | -Supports City's development plan<br>-Greater employment opportunities<br>-Increased tax revenue due to adjacent development (pg32)<br>-Supports joint development at new intermodal station<br>-Allows concentrated development along people mover alignment (pg32) | -Supports Town's development plan<br>-Meld with surrounding area (pg22)<br>-Joint development has support of developer of Wickford Junction Plaza for joint development opportunities (pg6) | -Corridor-wide access to short-term construction and long-term industrial and/or manufacturing employment opportunities (pg4-5)  | -Increased employment opportunities (pg3-6)<br>-Impact on property values and tax revenue is minimal (pg3-6)<br>-Increased tourism (pg3-7)                |

|                                      | STATION   |   | CORRIDOR   |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| Pedestrian and Bicycle Movement      | - Provides for safe pedestrian access between station and airport and alongside roads<br>- Provides bicycle storage (pg33)        |   | - Upgrade pedestrian crossings were identified (pg4-112)   |  | - Upgrade pedestrian crossing were identified<br>- Improved warning devices and barriers to pedestrian crossings at illegal locations (pg3-22)   |
| Air Quality                          | - Reduction in vehicle miles traveled<br>- Reduction in regional emissions (pg34)   |   | - None (pg4-83)  | - Construction equipment emissions<br>- Fugitive dust<br>- Roadway congestion due to construction traffic/activities (pg4-83)  | - Reduction in annual automobile source related emissions<br>- Consistent with the State Implementation Plan of all three states in the study area (pg4-81)  |
| Noise and Vibration                  | - Build Alternative reduces noise from all train sources within project area<br>- Overall decrease in maximum noise levels (pg36) |   | - "Severe Noise Impact" at 13 residences<br>- "Noise Impact" at 142 residences (pg4-96)<br>- "Vibration Impact" at 84 residences and one institution (pg4-102) | - Disturbing noise due to construction activities (pg4-100)<br>- Excessive vibration due to construction activities (pg4-105)  | - Noise emanating from the fixed electric facilities which could affect up to 75 residences<br>- Noise from train operations (pg4-23)<br>- Vibration increases with greater train speed and frequency of the intercity service which could result in a greater total dose of vibration energy at a given location over a 24 hour interval (pg4-23) |
| Traffic                              | - Two unsignalized intersections to be signalized<br>- Two signalized intersections to be upgraded (pg40)                         | - One parking lot with additional spaces to handle the anticipated 1,000 vehicles that will use the station daily (pg30)<br>- Modification of the timing of one signal (pg31) | - None (pg5-1)   | - Temporary closure of Rocky Hollow Road, Lincoln Avenue Bridge, Wellington Avenue Bridge, and Dexter Street<br>- Temporary traffic restriction at Cranston Street Bridge (pg4-12)   | - Reduction in vehicle miles traveled<br>- Reduction in demand for airport capacity (pg4-60)   |
| Ridership                            | - Project will result in reduction of vehicle miles traveled (pg41)<br>- Project will aid in modal shift from car to train (pg42) |   |  |  | - 3.63 passengers Boston to New York City Intercity Rail Ridership for 2010 (million trips per year) (pg4-60)  |
| Water Quality                        | - No surface water resources located within the project area<br>- Not within designated sole source aquifer (pg42)                | - Located within a sole source aquifer<br>- Groundwater classification of GAA including recharge areas to an aquifer and wellhead protection areas (pg26)                     | - Surface water and groundwater will be affected by operational spills (pg4-47, 4-59)  | - Potential for localized soil contamination of ground water during construction (pg4-46)<br>- Potential for accidental release of vehicular fuels or toxic supplies into the surface water during construction (pg4-58)<br>- Erosion and sedimentation during construction (pg4-58) | - Small potential for adversely impacting surface and groundwater quality<br>- Station sites are located within sole source aquifers and designated well head protection areas (pg4-108)   |
| Permits in Rhode Island project area | - Requires RIPDES permit and State Water Quality Certification (pg43)   |   |  |  | - Federal – Section 404 (b) (1) Permit, Section 10 Permit, Section 410 Water Quality Certificate, Section 106 Consultation – Historic and Archaeological Resources,  |

|  | STATION   |  | CORRIDOR   |   |  |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|
|  |   |  |  |   | Bridge Permit, FAA Form 7460-1 Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration, FAA Form 117-1 Notice of Progress or Alteration<br>-Rhode Island – Freshwater Wetlands Permit, Coastal Resources Management Council Preliminary Determination and/or Permit (pg5-22, 5-23) |
| Wetland                                  | -No wetlands within the project area (pg43)   | -Wetland Alteration not likely, requires further study (pg28)  | -0.04 acres of Palustrine Forested Wetland (Federal), 0.23 acres of Riverbank Wetland (State), 0.69 acres of Perimeter Wetland (State), and 1.08 acres of overlapping Perimeter and Riverbank Wetland (State) will be altered (pg4-39) | -Potential erosion during construction (pg4-42)   | -No wetlands would be dredged or filled as part of the project<br>-10 of the 25 fixed facilities will be developed and three of the seven bridge modifications will occur in buffer areas around wetlands (pg4-106)  |
| Water Body Modification and Wildlife     | -No wetland or water resources within project area<br>-No wildlife corridors or significant wildlife habitat (pg47) | -See Wetland, above  | -1,050 linear feet of retaining wall construction in areas identified as Important Habitat<br>-4,245 linear feet of retaining wall construction in areas identified as Potential Habitat (pg4-76)                                      | -Disturbance of Habitat during construction (pg4-76)  | -Acquisition of 0.1 acres of the Great Swamp Wildlife Management Area<br>-Nine other sites are identified as protected parcels located in the NEC study area (pg4-107)   |
| Floodplain                               | -No impact to the 100-year or 500-year flood zones (pg47)   | -Zone C – minimal flooding<br>-Small portion with an area of 100-year flood impacts (pg28)   | -450 cubic yards of fill in 100-year floodplain at Pawtuxet River<br>-4 cubic yards of fill in 100-year floodplain at Mashapaug Pond (pg4-64)  | -Potential for soil erosion during construction of Pawtuxet River parallel span (pg4-65)      | -Potential impact of some portion of the floodplain, an evaluation of potential effects to the floodplains is required (pg4-107)   |
| Wild and Scenic Rivers                   | -No designated rivers within the project area (pg47)  |  | -No designated rivers within the project area (pg4-61)   | -No designated rivers within the project area (pg4-61)  |  |
| Coastal Zone                             | -Not located within a coastal zone (pg49)   |  | -None (pg4-62)   | -None (pg4-62)  | -In Connecticut project facilities and bridges are located in the coastal zone (pg4-108)   |
| Historic and Archaeological Preservation | -Eligibility studies completed (pg49)   | -No historic buildings or sites<br>-Site falls on the traditional homelands of the Narragansett Indian Tribe and could hold archaeological significance (pg28) | -Historic sites within the project area are Wellington Avenue, Gorham Factory Complex, United Traction Depot, Pawtucket/Central Falls Railroad Station (pg4-30)  | -Minor potential for disturbance to RI Historical Cemetery No. 4 during construction (pg4-30) | -Potential adverse effect on 31 historic sites (pg4-11)<br>-No archaeological resources affected with the single exception of the routing of the New London substation utility feed (pg4-45)   |
| Hazardous Waste Sites                    | -Baylis site to be remediated (pg53)  |  | -None (pg4-9)  | -Potential to encounter subsurface ROW contamination (pg4-8)                                  | -Elmwood Paralleling Station (pg4-113)   |

|                              | STATION  |  | CORRIDOR   |                 |  |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|-----------------|--|
| Visual                       | - Project intended to complement the surrounding area (pg55)   | - Project intended to complement the surrounding area (pg22) | -None (pg4-33)   | -None (pg4-33)  | -Overhead catenary system (pg4-95)   |
| Energy                       | -Design will use latest energy saving features (pg55)  |  | -None (pg4-116)  | -None (pg4-116) | -High speed rail service has a significant advantage over existing intercity transportation and is the most energy efficient of the scenarios (pg4-37) |
| Construction                 | -No residential areas affected<br>-Traffic impacts will be coordinated with the City and RIAC (pg55, 58) |  | -New track and signalization construction<br>-Track Rehabilitation and surfacing<br>-Track lowering operations<br>-New bridges<br>-Bridge and existing wall foundation modifications<br>-Bridge superstructure modifications<br>-Embankment wall construction<br>-Cut wall construction (pg2-24) |                 | -Overhead catenary system<br>-Bridge modification(pg1-3)   |
| ADA Access and Public Safety | - Will provide elevators and all necessary ADA components (pg58)   | - Will comply with all necessary ADA components (pg4)        |  |                 |  |

\* Not a NEPA Document

# **South County Commuter Rail Project**

## **REEVALUATION OF THE FEBRUARY 2003 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

### **WICKFORD JUNCTION TRAIN STATION NORTH KINGSTOWN, RI**

**January 2006**

Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
Intermodal Planning  
Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Transit  
Administration**

REGION I  
Connecticut, Maine,  
Massachusetts,  
New Hampshire,  
Rhode Island, Vermont

Volpe Center  
55 Broadway Suite 920  
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093  
617-494-2055  
617-494-2865 (fax)

JAN 23 2006

JAN 19 2006

Mr. James R. Capaldi, P.E.  
Director  
Department of Transportation  
Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903-1124

Re: **Reevaluation of the South County Commuter Rail Project  
Finding of No Significant Impact - Wickford Junction Train Station**

Dear Mr. Capaldi:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has reviewed the Rhode Island Department of Transportation request for a reevaluation of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) issued on February 6, 2003 for the South County Commuter Rail Project. This project involves a 20-mile extension of commuter rail service along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor from Providence to North Kingston. Since RIDOT is proposing to operate service along an established rail line, the construction elements are limited to the development of a new station in North Kingston (Wickford Junction): 1,000 car parking garage, full high platform, tracking siding and mainline interlocking. The parking garage is proposed to be developed under a public/private partnership with the local developer of the adjacent commercial properties.

Since the issuance of the FONSI in 2003, RIDOT has continued to work with the Town of Kingston and the local developer. During this cooperative effort, the design of the parking facility has been modified to further improve intermodal connections and to better match the garage with the existing mall businesses. The key elements of the revised plan include; a lower garage profile; new circulation pattern to improve access to the station site from Route 102, and an improved internal circulation. Originally, the developer's vacant lot and a small strip of property from Amtrak along the Northeast corridor were identified for acquisition. Three homes encompassing four properties lots along Route 102 were identified in the 2002 environmental assessment, but were not proposed for acquisition based on the original garage layout. The three homes proximate to the proposed garage were to be mitigated through the construction of noise barrier to alleviate the impact of vehicle traffic volume to the garage.

As a result of this project change, these four private properties will be acquired in their entirety. With the acquisition of these properties the noise barrier will be eliminated from the project design. RIDOT has proposed to acquire these properties in accordance with the Uniform relocation Assistance and Real property Acquisition Act. Each property owner was notified by letter dated March 9, 2005 informing them of the reevaluation process and that their property had been identified for possible acquisition for the project.

Section 4(f)

Based upon the information presented by RIDOT, the FTA finds that the February 6, 2003 determination of no use of 4(f) resources remains valid. As indicated earlier that if there are resources recovered as a result of this site investigation, FTA needs to be immediately notified so we may review this 4(f) determination and identify appropriate mitigations measures.

Water Quality Impacts

In accordance with Safe Water Drinking Act, the Environmental Protection Agency has determined that "RIDOT's proposed land acquisition and the development and operation of the station and reversal siding would not cause contamination to the underlying aquifer that could potentially be harmful to the people in the aquifer's service area." – Letter dated June 16, 2005

Section 106

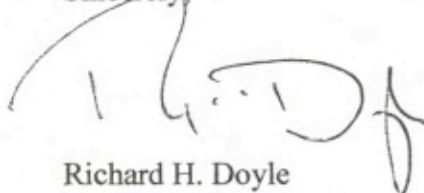
In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, FTA made a finding of No Effect on February 6, 2003 in consultation with the Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC). On December 15, 2003, RIHPHC indicated that the homes and properties being acquired are not historically significant and their removal will have no effect. However, since the properties are located within a larger area that is sensitive for Native American resources, a Phase I investigation should be completed to determine the presence of archaeological resources. On June 3, 2005, the Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office (NITHPO) indicated that a monitoring process is needed and coordination for the archaeological review is needed. In response to these concerns, a Programmatic Agreement (PA) dated October 31, 2005 has been executed by FTA, RIHPHC, NITHPO and RIDOT which establishes a protocol for the phased identification and evaluation of historic properties.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Finding

Based on the correspondence and information provided by RIDOT, a June 23, 2005 site visit and the executed PA, in accordance with 23 CFR§771.129(c) the FTA finds the February 6, 2003 determination Finding of No Significant Impact remains valid with the exception that the 106 section is now replaced by the October 31, 2005 Programmatic Agreement and any possible 4(f) resources will have to continue to be monitored.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this matter. FTA looks forward to continuing to work with the RIDOT on this important transit project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Doyle", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard H. Doyle  
Regional Administrator



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
ENVIRONMENTAL & INTERMODAL PLANNING  
Two Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02903-1124  
ENVIRONMENTAL PHONE (401) 222-2023  
INTERMODAL PHONE (401) 222-4203  
FAX (401) 222-2207 TDD (401) 222-4971

June 21, 2005

Mr. Richard H. Doyle  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration  
Transportation Systems Center  
Kendall Square  
55 Broadway, Suite 920  
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093

**Re: South County Commuter Rail Project Environmental Assessment Reevaluation  
Wickford Junction Train Station  
Request for Approval**

Dear Mr. Doyle:

We have been working closely with staff from your office over the past year to draft and finalize the attached South County Commuter Rail Project Environmental Assessment (EA) Reevaluation dated June 2005. Your office issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on February 6, 2003 for the original EA.

Since then, the parking facility option, traffic circulation and intermodal connections within the project area have been modified to make the parking garage match better with the existing Wickford Junction development. In addition, these changes will further improve intermodal connections, including vehicle and RIPTA/intercity bus circulation, and drop off activities adjacent to the station area.

As part of the EA Reevaluation, RIDOT<sup>7</sup> is proposing to acquire four (4) additional privately owned properties in order to construct the revised station concept and enhance the intermodal connections. There are three (3) residential homes located on the four properties. As part of the 2003 EA, due to their proximity to the Northeast Corridor and the proposed parking garage, noise mitigation was proposed for the three homes; with the Town of North Kingstown recommending their acquisition at the time. With this proposed acquisition, the proposed noise barriers contained in the 2003 EA will be eliminated from the project design.

Mr. Richard H. Doyle

Page 2

June 21, 2005

As part of EA Reevaluation, comment letters were received from the Narragansett Indian Tribe and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, RIDOT's Real Estate Office notified in writing the four (4) affected property owners regarding the proposed acquisition, and has also initiated direct discussions with them.

As stated previously, the purpose for these acquisitions is for improved intermodal connections, including vehicular and bus circulation. While additional traffic impact study may be necessary as we progress into preliminary engineering, no traffic signals are warranted at this proposed access/egress point along Ten Rod Road. Options also include right turn only into and out of the train station facility.

In addition, upon the request of your staff, updated ridership information for South County Commuter Rail Service has been forwarded to your office.

As documented in the EA Reevaluation, the acquisition of these additional properties will not result in significant impacts to the human and natural environment. We have modified the report in response to specific comments on Section 106 Relocation, sole source aquifer, and hazardous materials issues.

Recognizing these minor changes to the report, we are requesting the FTA accept the EA Reevaluation and its concurrence that the FONSI issued in February 2003 remains valid. We have enclosed two (2) copies of the EA Reevaluation for your review.

In support of this request, RIDOT is committed to the following mitigation efforts:

#### Section 106

Upon acquisition of the four (4) parcels, RIDOT will initiate a Phase I archaeological survey, and transmit its results to the RISHPO and NITHPO for review and comment. In addition, the NITHPO will monitor the Phase I archaeological survey. Should additional archaeological studies be required, RIDOT ensures that they will be conducted prior to the initiation of any ground disturbance or building demolition.

#### Relocation

RIDOT ensures that all property acquisitions will be accomplished in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, including compensation at fair market value and relocation assistance.

Mr. Richard H. Doyle

Page 3

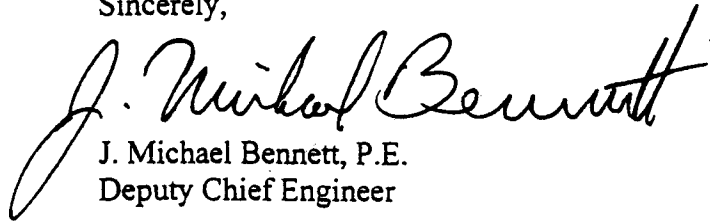
June 21, 2005

Hazardous Materials

Upon the start of preliminary engineering, RIDOT will initiate a Phase I environmental site assessment for the four properties. This information will be coordinated with RIDEM to determine whether a Phase II study will be required.

We look forward to the FTA's response to our request for validation of the EA FONSI issued in February 2003. Should you have any questions, please contact Stephen Devine of my staff at (401) 222-4203, extension 4063.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. Michael Bennett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "J." and last name "Bennett" clearly legible. It is positioned above the printed name and title.

J. Michael Bennett, P.E.  
Deputy Chief Engineer

JMB/SAD/amt

Enclosures

c: E. Parker, Jr., E. Szymanski, S. Devine

## Project Background & Update

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) an Environmental Assessment (EA) dated February 2003, for the South County Commuter Rail Project. With the growth of congestion in the I-95 and Route 1/Route 4 corridors, RIDOT and state and local transportation officials have sought to institute commuter rail service south of the existing service to Providence and identified the extension of service to Wickford Junction as minimal operating segment of future Providence to Westerly rail service.

On February 6, 2003, the FTA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). RIDOT has continued to work with the Town of North Kingstown and, in a public/private partnership, with the local developer of the adjacent commercial properties. During this cooperative effort, the parking garage option, traffic circulation and intermodal connections within the project area have been modified to make the garage match better with the existing mall businesses and properties and to further improve intermodal connections, including vehicle and RIPTA/intercity bus circulation, and drop off activities adjacent to the station area.

The key elements of the revised plan include a lower garage profile, which results in a larger footprint to accommodate the expected ridership. Additionally, a new circulation pattern has been developed to improve RIPTA bus access to the station site from Route 102 and improve internal site circulation. In order to construct the revised station concept and enhance the intermodal connections, additional property will need to be acquired adjacent to the site.

In the February 2003 EA, the developer's vacant lot and a small strip of property from Amtrak along the Northeast Corridor were identified for acquisition. Three homes, encompassing four property lots along Route 102, west of the Northeast Corridor (NEC), were identified in the EA, but were not proposed for acquisition based on the station layout proposed in the EA. The three houses are proximate to the proposed garage and noise mitigation was proposed to alleviate the impact from the vehicular traffic volume to the garage.

Under the revised station plan, these parcels are proposed to be acquired in their entirety for roadway access from Route 102, an intermodal connection facility, and an improved garage footprint. Under the February 2003 EA, a noise barrier on two sides of the garage was proposed to mitigate potential noise impacts to these properties from the project. With the acquisition of the affected properties the proposed noise barriers will be eliminated from the project design. The affected properties are shown on Figure 1. The proposed train station layout is shown in Figure 2.

## Detailed Environmental Evaluation

Four specific environmental categories were evaluated in detail as part of this reevaluation: Section 106/4(f) review, relocation, water quality, and hazardous materials.

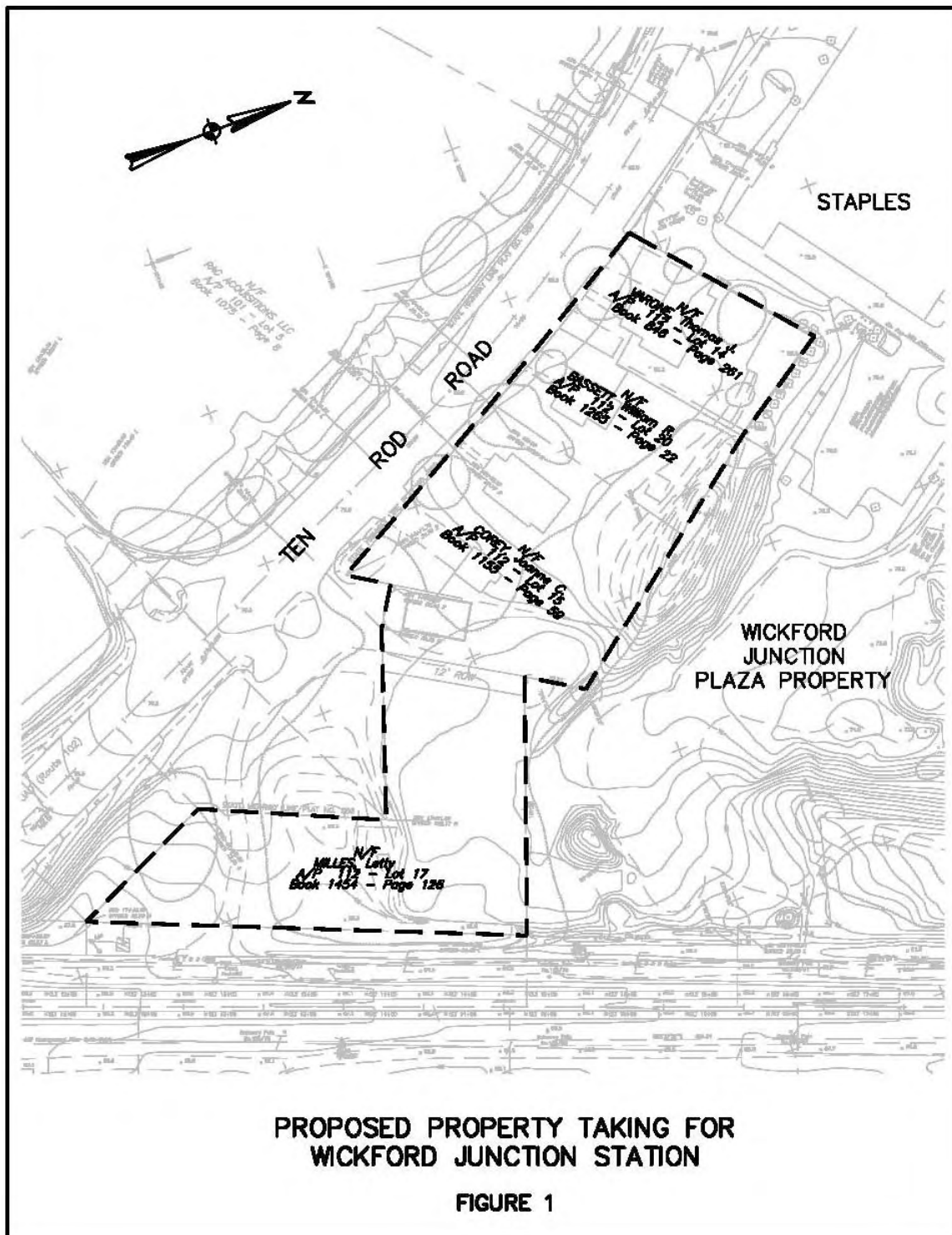
### Section 106/4(f)

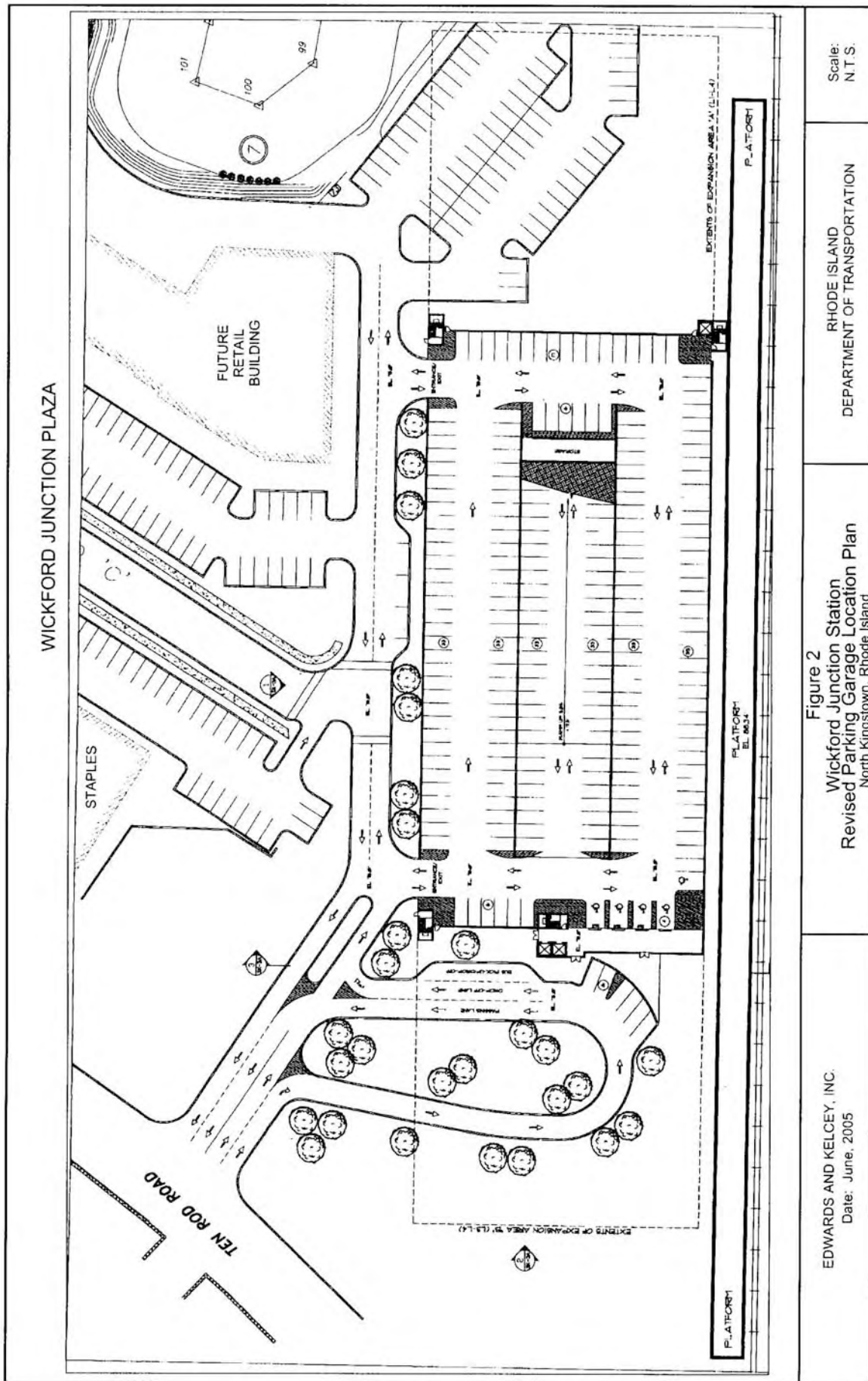
In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the RISHPO (a.k.a. Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission) and the Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office (NITHPO) were notified of the proposed acquisition of four adjoining properties for inclusion into the South County Commuter Rail-Wickford Junction Project. The RISHPO's December 10, 2003 review correspondence indicated that the existing structures are not National Register eligible and are not significant historic resources. Their removal will have a Section 106 finding of "no effect". However, the RISHPO did note that the subject properties are located within a larger area that is sensitive for the presence of Native American archaeological resources and therefore they recommend that a Phase I archaeological disturbance assessment should be conducted to determine whether or not undisturbed soils are present. Based on the Phase I results, then if necessary, a more comprehensive Phase I (c) archaeological survey would be conducted to determine whether or not potentially significant archaeological resources are present.

The NITHPO has responded to RIDOT's June 2, 2005 written project notification and announcement of the proposed archaeological fieldwork, and per their June 3, 2005 letter, they have indicated that they will monitor the Phase I archaeological survey. At this time the subject properties are still in private ownership. The Section 106 review will be concluded after RIDOT has acquired the properties and the archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken and the results transmitted to the RISHPO and the NITHPO for review and comment. Prior to commencing the fieldwork, RIDOT will notify NITHPO fourteen days in advance in order to give NITHPO the opportunity to be present when the fieldwork occurs. Should additional archaeological studies be required, RIDOT ensures that they will be conducted and the results transmitted to the RISHPO and the NITHPO for review and comment prior to the initiation of any ground disturbance or building demolition. The adjacent area of the Wickford Junction rail station has previously been determined to be disturbed by a sand and gravel operation and will not affect significant historic properties (RIHPHC letter dated August 23, 2002). The correspondence referenced above is included in Attachment 1 to this document.

In response to these concerns, a Programmatic Agreement (PA) dated October 31, 2005 has been executed by FTA, RIHPHC, NITHPO, and RIDOT which establishes a protocol for the phased identification and evaluation of historic properties.

RIDOT's Supervising Historic Preservationist has reviewed the project and has made a determination with respect to Section 4(f). Since the project does not involve the use of land from significant, publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, or significant historic (above ground) resources, a Section 4(f) evaluation is not required.





### Relocation

The parcels involved are shown in Figure 1 and include:

- AP112/Lot 14 – 999 Ten Rod Road, Owned by Thomas J. and Lynn M. Varone at 999 Ten Rod Road. Single-family house on 29,700 sf of property. Owner relocation required.
- AP112/Lot 20 – 991 Ten Rod Road, Owned by William R. Bassett at 991 Ten Rod Road. Single-family house on 28,900 sf of property. Owner relocation required.
- AP112/Lot 15 – 981 Ten Rod Road, Owned by Joanne C. Corey at 981 Ten Rod Road. Single-family house on 39,200 sf of property. Owner relocation required.
- AP112/Lot 17 – Owned by Letty I. Mills and Michael Gudeczauskas at 29 Periwinkle Drive, Narragansett, RI. No buildings exist on the 72,700 sf property. No owner relocation is required.

Each property owner has received a letter, dated March 9, 2005, from RIDOT's Real Estate Office, informing them of EA Reevaluation process and that their property has been identified for possible acquisition for this project. See Attachment 2 to this document.

The proposed property takings are consistent with the Town of North Kingstown's position on improved circulation and intermodal connections at the train station. See Attachment 2 for a copy of the Town's January 8, 2004 letter. In addition, the Town, during the EA process, had previously proposed taking these properties in lieu of the noise barrier mitigation.

All designated takings will be accomplished in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act for the designated properties taken for project construction, including compensation at fair market value and relocation assistance.

### Hazardous Materials

Potential environmental encumbrances will also be evaluated before the properties are acquired. RIDOT will initiate a Phase I environmental site assessment for the four properties. The assessment will include site reconnaissance to document surficial conditions and identify areas of particular environmental concern. A site history will be gathered using Sanborn maps and Polk City Directories and a review will be conducted of available federal, state, and local regulatory files that would be expected to indicate the management of petroleum and/or hazardous materials on the subject properties, or the presence of underground storage tanks. This review will also include the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act RCRA Generator's List, National Priorities List (NPL), Site Remediation State List, and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) List. This information will allow RIDEM to determine whether a more intensive Phase II study will be required.

No other change in impact would result from incorporation of these parcels into the overall project development.

### Water Quality

The proposed train station site is located above the Hunt, Annaquatucket, and Pettaquamsett sole source aquifers with groundwater classified as GAA by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM).

Subsequent to the February 6, 2003 FONSI, the EPA provided comments on the project in its letter of March 20, 2003. As part of the EA Reevaluation process, EPA was contacted by RIDOT on March 5, 2004 and in May 2005 requested an updated concurrence with respect to the sole source aquifer issues. On May 16, 2005, EPA responded that the project scope change as proposed does not pose a threat to wetlands, and in its letter of June 16, 2005, responded that there are no impacts to the sole source aquifer. See Attachment 3 to this document.

### **Summary of Environmental Changes**

The Environmental Assessment (February 2003) assessed the social and environmental effects of the South County Commuter Rail Service and Wickford Junction Train Station. Table 1 on the following page identifies environmental categories addressed in the EA, and lists the potential changes in impact associated with the addition of the four (4) properties to the project area.

RIDOT is moving forward with the required environmental process and will report the archaeologic/historic and environmental investigation results to FTA in separate detailed reports.

A summary of anticipated changes is shown below in Table 1.

### **Conclusion**

The acquisition of the four properties along Ten Rod Road for the Wickford Junction Train Station will have no significant adverse impacts on the environment, and therefore will not affect the Finding of No Significant Impact issued by the Federal Transit Administration on February 6, 2003.

| <b>Table 1 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES</b> |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Environmental Category</b>                   | <b>Comments</b>  | <b>Anticipated Change in Impact from EA</b>  |
| Land Use  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent with Comprehensive Plan by specific reference</li> </ul>   | No Change  |
| Park and Recreation Areas                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No public parks or recreational facilities at site</li> </ul>   | No Change  |
| Farmland  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No project area land is farmed but the soil is suitable for agriculture</li> </ul>  | No Change  |
| Social/ Environmental Justice                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent with Environmental Justice objectives</li> </ul>   | No Change  |
| Relocation                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three residences, four lots</li> </ul>  | No Significant Impact Anticipated - RIDOT will follow all applicable Federal Relocation Requirements |
| Economic  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports Town's development plan</li> </ul>   | No Change  |
| Joint Development                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint development has support of developer of Wickford Junction Plaza for joint development opportunities</li> </ul>  | No Change  |
| Pedestrian and Bicycle Movement                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides safe pedestrian access</li> <li>Will connect to proposed RIDOT Bike Path</li> </ul>  | No Change  |
| Air Quality                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change in facility use proposed</li> </ul>   | No Change  |
| Noise   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change in facility use proposed</li> </ul>   | Present residential impact will be eliminated by property acquisitions                               |
| Traffic   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change in facility use proposed</li> </ul>   | No Change  |
| Ridership                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change in facility use proposed</li> </ul>   | No Change  |
| Water Quality                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change in facility drainage area is proposed. All stormwater systems will be designed in accordance with state regulations</li> </ul>                                | No Change  |
| Permits   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change in facility use proposed</li> </ul>   | No Change  |
| Wetland   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change in facility use proposed</li> </ul>   | No Change  |
| Water Body Modification and Wildlife            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change in facility use proposed</li> </ul>   | No Change  |
| Floodplain                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change in facility use proposed</li> </ul>   | No Change  |
| Wild and Scenic Rivers                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No designated rivers within the project site</li> </ul>   | No Change  |
| Coastal Zone                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not located within a coastal zone</li> </ul>  | No Change  |
| Historic/Archaeological Preservation            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No historic buildings or sites</li> <li>Site falls on the traditional homelands of the Narragansett Indian Tribe and could hold archaeological significance.</li> </ul> | No Change Anticipated – Phase I investigation will be completed                                      |
| Hazardous Waste Sites                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No identified hazardous sites</li> </ul>  | No Change Anticipated – Phase I investigation will be completed                                      |
| Visual  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project designed to complement the surrounding area</li> </ul>  | No Significant Change  |
| Energy  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design utilizes latest energy saving features</li> </ul>  | No Change  |
| Construction                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change in construction traffic</li> <li>Larger overall project site will facilitate project construction</li> </ul>  | No Significant Change  |
| Access  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change in facility use proposed</li> </ul>   | No Change  |

# ATTACHMENT 1

## Section 106 Correspondence



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
ENVIRONMENTAL & INTERMODAL PLANNING  
Two Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02903-1124  
ENVIRONMENTAL PHONE (401) 222-2023  
INTERMODAL PHONE (401) 222-4203  
FAX (401) 222-2207 TDD (401) 222-4971

December 20, 2005

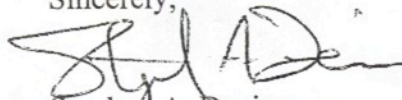
Mr. Peter Butler  
Director, Office of Planning & Program Development  
Federal Transit Administration  
Transportation Systems Center  
Kendall Square  
55 Broadway, Suite 920  
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093

Dear Mr. ~~Butler~~: *Peter*

Attached are two (2) original Wickford Junction Station Project Programmatic Agreements for your files. The Agreement, covering the Section 106 process, has been signed by all parties. Both RIDOT and the NITHPO have retained an original, and by copy of this letter, an original has been forwarded to the RISHPO.

We await FTA's final review and approval of the Environmental Assessment (EA) Reevaluation. Please contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

  
Stephen A. Devine  
Chief, Intermodal Planning

SAD/amt  
Attachments (2)

c: E. Parker, Jr., J. M. Bennett, E. Szymanski, M. Hebert, S. Devine  
E. Sanderson (w/attachment)

## **PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT**

### **REGARDING THE SOUTH COUNTY COMMUTER RAIL/WICKFORD JUNCTION PROJECT, NORTH KINGSTOWN, RHODE ISLAND**

**WHEREAS**, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) proposes to assist the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) in the construction of the South County Commuter Rail/Wickford Junction Project (the Project) ; and

**WHEREAS**, FTA has determined that the implementation of the Project may affect properties eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and has consulted with the Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Officer (RISHPO) pursuant to 36 CFR § 800, regulations implementing Section 106 [and 110(f)] of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470f); and

**WHEREAS**, FTA has determined that the implementation of this project may also affect properties off tribal lands that are eligible for inclusion in the National Register, and for which Indian tribes may attach religious and cultural significance, and has consulted with the Narragansett Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (NITHPO); and

**WHEREAS**, RIDOT has participated in the consultation and has been invited by FTA to sign this PA as an invited signatory; and

**WHEREAS**, FTA has notified the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Council) of the development of this PA and the Council has elected not to participate in the consultation;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, FTA, NITHPO, RISHPO, and the RIDOT agree that the Project shall be implemented in accordance with the following stipulations in order to take into account the effect of this Project on historic properties.

#### **STIPULATIONS**

FTA shall ensure that the following stipulations are implemented:

##### **1. PHASED IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

RIDOT will ensure that the identification of historic properties is completed in accordance with 36 CFR§ 800.4(b)(2), once it is able to gain access to all parcels in the area of potential effects for the purpose of conducting a Phase I archaeological survey and any subsequent evaluation studies required in order to complete the identification of historic properties. In consultation with the NITHPO, RISHPO, and the RIDOT and guided by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Evaluation, FTA

shall apply the National Register criteria (36 CFR § 63) to properties identified within the area of potential effects that have not been previously evaluated for National Register eligibility, and determine whether properties are eligible in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.4(c).

## **2. EFFECTS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROPERTIES**

In consultation with the NITHPO, RISHPO, and the RIDOT, FTA shall ensure that archaeological properties subject to direct or indirect effects resulting from the Project are identified and that such properties are protected from project effects where prudent and feasible. Where protection cannot be successfully implemented, FTA will develop a treatment plan/data recovery plan in consultation with NITHPO, RISHPO, and the RIDOT. FTA shall submit it to the NITHPO, RISHPO, and the RIDOT for 30 day's review. Unless the NITHPO, RISHPO, and the RIDOT object within 30 days after receipt of the treatment plan/data recovery plan, the FTA shall ensure that it is implemented.

## **3. POST-REVIEW DISCOVERIES**

A. If historic properties are discovered or unanticipated effects on historic properties are found after the FTA's approval of the undertaking and after construction has commenced, the FTA shall implement any post review discovery plan developed pursuant to this PA, or if such plan is not in effect shall take reasonable efforts to avoid or minimize adverse effects to such properties, determine reasonable actions that it can take to resolve any adverse effects, and notify the RISHPO, RIDOT and NITHPO within 48 hours of the discovery.

1. The notification shall describe the FTA's assessment of the National Register eligibility of the property and propose actions to resolve the adverse effects. The NITHPO, RISHPO, and the RIDOT shall respond within 48 hours of the notification. The FTA shall take into account their recommendations regarding National Register eligibility and the proposed actions, and then carry out appropriate actions. The FTA shall provide the NITHPO, RISHPO, and the RIDOT with a report of the actions when they are complete.

2. The FTA, in consultation with the NITHPO, RISHPO, and the RIDOT, may assume a newly-discovered property to be eligible for listing in the National Register for the purposes of Section 106, and shall specify the National Register criteria used to assume the property's eligibility.

## **4. DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

A. Should any party to this agreement object at any time to any actions proposed or the manner in which the terms of this PA are implemented, FTA shall consult with the objecting party(ies) to resolve the objection. If FTA determines that such objection(s) cannot be resolved, FTA will:

1. Forward all documentation relevant to the dispute to the Council in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.2 (b)(2). Upon receipt of adequate documentation, the Council shall review and advise FTA on the resolution of the objection within 30 days. Any comment provided by the Council, and all comments from the parties to the PA, will be taken into account by FTA in reaching a final decision regarding the dispute.
2. If the Council does not provide comments regarding the dispute within 30 days after receipt of adequate documentation, FTA may render a decision regarding the dispute. In reaching its decision, FTA will take into account all comments regarding the dispute from the parties to the PA.
3. FTA's responsibility to carry out all other actions subject to the terms of this PA that are not the subject of the dispute remain unchanged. FTA will notify all parties of its decision in writing before implementing that portion of the project subject to dispute under this stipulation. FTA's decision will be final.

## **5. AMENDMENTS AND NONCOMPLIANCE**

If any signatory to this PA, determines that its terms will not or cannot be carried out or that an amendment to its terms must be made, that party shall immediately consult with the other parties to develop an amendment. The amendment will be effective on the date a copy signed by all of the original signatories is filed with the Council. If the signatories cannot agree to appropriate terms to amend the PA, any signatory may terminate the agreement in accordance with Stipulation 6, below.

## **6. TERMINATION**

If the PA is not amended following the consultation set out in Stipulation 5, it may be terminated by any signatory. The Council may be asked by any signatory to the PA to review the terms of the agreement and its implementation by the FTA. If the Council determines that the terms of the PA are not being carried out, the PA will be terminated. If the PA is terminated for any reason, the agency official shall comply with subpart B of 36 CFR § 800 (800.3-800.13).

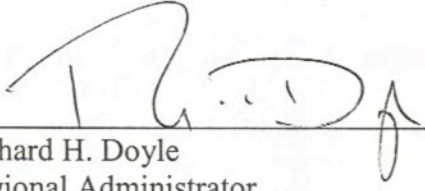
## **7. DURATION.**

This PA shall be null and void if its terms are not carried out within six (6) years from the date of its execution unless the signatories agree in writing to an extension for carrying out its terms. If this PA is not extended, the FTA shall so notify the signatories to the PA and, if it chooses to continue with the Project, then it shall re-initiate review of the Project in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.3 through 800.7.

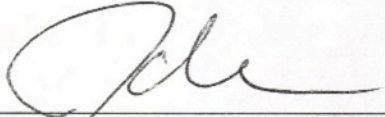
EXECUTION of this PA by FTA, NITHPO, RISHPO, and the RIDOT, and implementation of its terms evidence that FTA has taken into account the effects of this undertaking on historic properties and afforded the Council an opportunity to comment.

**SIGNATORIES:**

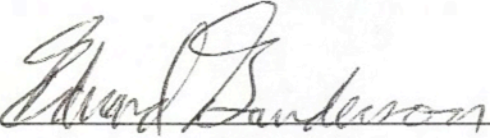
**FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION**

By:  Date: 10/31/05  
Richard H. Doyle  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration

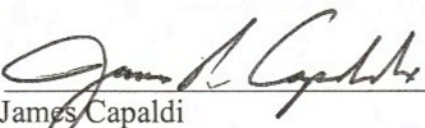
**NARRAGANSETT INDIAN TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER**

By:  Date: 12/07/2005  
John Brown  
Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

**RHODE ISLAND STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER**

By:  Date: 11/22/2005  
Edward F. Sanderson  
Executive Director  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

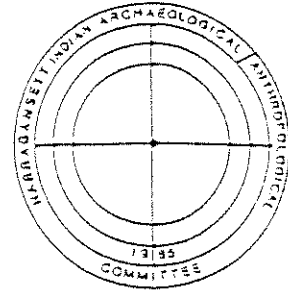
By:  Date: 11-10-05  
James Capaldi  
Director  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation

211 7/11

# NITHPO

## Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office

Narragansett Indian Longhouse  
P. O. Box 700  
Wyoming, Rhode Island 02898



June 3, 2005

Mr. Edward S. Szymanski, P.E.  
Associate Chief Engineer  
Office of Environmental & Intermodal Planning  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
Two Capitol Hill, Rm. 226

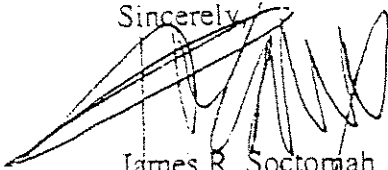
Re: South County Commuter Rail/Wickford Junction ✓  
RIFAP No. R13-SCCR

Dear Mr. Szymanski,

Thank you for sending the additional request for consultation. In reviewing research and historical data on the project space it has been determined that the area is sensitive. Therefore the NITHPO will require monitoring on this project. I would also like to schedule a field inspection of the project area with your office.

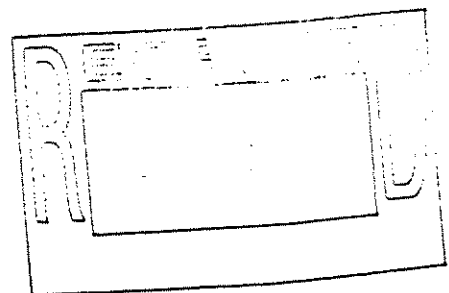
Please transmit a copy of the archeological scope of work so that a monitoring proposal can be formulated, and a possible range of time when the inspection may be carried out. Once again, thank you for the update. Please call me directly at (401) 829-2583, should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



James R. Soctomah  
Deputy THPO

cc. Messrs. Brown III, Butler/Rizzo/McCarthy-FHWA, Hebert-RIDOT





STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

JUN 3 2005

Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
ENVIRONMENTAL & INTERMODAL PLANNING  
Two Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02903-1124  
ENVIRONMENTAL PHONE (401) 222-2023  
INTERMODAL PHONE (401) 222-4203  
FAX (401) 222-2207 TDD (401) 222-4971

June 2, 2005

Mr. James R. Soctomah  
Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer  
Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office  
P.O. Box 700  
Wyoming, RI 02898

CERTIFIED MAIL

Re: South County Commuter Rail Project/Wickford Junction Train Station  
North Kingstown, Rhode Island  
RIFAP No. R13-SCCR(001)  
NITHPO Monitoring

Dear Mr. Soctomah:

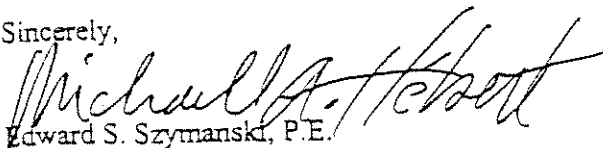
In our previous letter of February 23, 2004 to the NITHPO Office (copy enclosed), we indicated that this project involves the acquisition of five abutting properties along Ten Road Road; the properties in question will be subjected to an archaeological survey based on the RIHPHC's December 10, 2003 review of the proposed acquisition. Our letter also requested whether or not your office was interested in monitoring the Phase I archaeological survey that will be conducted on these properties, after RIDOT has acquired title to them.

As we did not receive a reply to our letter, we are again requesting your response concerning whether or not you have any interest in monitoring the archaeological survey. Please transmit your written response within one week of the receipt of this letter, which is being faxed to your office at FHWA on this date.

Should your reply be affirmative, we will transmit to your office a copy of the archaeological scope of services and request a monitoring proposal; our office can also schedule a field inspection of the project area, if required. As we mentioned above, the survey will be conducted after we have acquired the parcels.

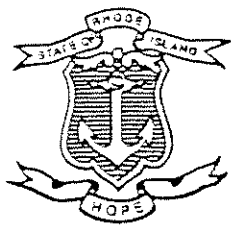
Should you have any questions, or require additional information, please contact Mr. Michael Hébert, Supervising Historic Preservation Specialist/RIDOT at 222-2023, x 4040.

Sincerely,

*for:*   
Edward S. Szymanski, P.E.  
Associate Chief Engineer

MAH/cc  
Enclosure

cc: Messrs. Bennett, Devine, Szymanski, Hébert, Thomas-Chief Sachem; Ms. Szala; all w/o



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

Old State House • 150 Benefit Street • Providence, R.I. 02903-1209

TEL (401) 222-2673

FAX (401) 222-2963

TTY (401) 222-3700

Website [www.rhphc.state.ri.us](http://www.rhphc.state.ri.us)

December 10, 2003

Mr. Edward S. Szymanski  
Associate Chief Engineer  
Office of Environmental Programs  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
2 Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Property Acquisition  
South County Commuter Rail  
Ten Rod Road, North Kingstown

Dear Mr. Szymanski:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission staff has reviewed the materials you have provided on the five properties along Ten Rod Road that are proposed for acquisition for the Wickford Junction commuter rail station. We have the following comments.

These properties are part of a small residential community that developed at Wickford Junction in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The houses on two lots were previously demolished. The houses on other three properties are not considered historically significant and their removal will have no effect.

The properties are located within a larger area that is sensitive for Native American resources. Significant archaeological sites, including RI-1000, have been encountered nearby. Although portions of these properties have been disturbed, it is possible that undisturbed soils are present. Therefore, archaeological investigations should be undertaken to determine whether undisturbed soils are present and, if they are, a Phase I investigation should be completed to determine whether archaeological resources are present.

These comments are provided in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Richard E. Greenwood, Project Review Coordinator of this office.

Very truly yours,

Edward F. Sanderson

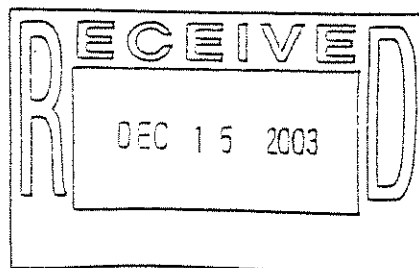
Executive Director

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Cc: Mike Hebert, RIDOT

John Brown, NITHPO

(031210.01)



# ATTACHMENT 2

## Property Acquisition Coordination



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Department of Transportation  
Real Estate  
Two Capitol Hill, Room 317  
Providence, RI 02903-1124

OFFICE (401) 222-2411  
FAX (401) 222-1212  
TDD (401) 222-4971

March 9, 2005

Thomas J. Varone  
999Ten Rod Road  
N. Kingstown, RI 02852

Dear Mr. Varone:

Subject: Wickford Junction Train Station, North Kingstown

As you may be aware, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation is working with the Federal Transit Administration to extend commuter rail service from Providence to Wickford. An Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project was originally undertaken in February 2003 and a Finding Of No Significant Impact was issued on February 6, 2003. Since then the project area has been expanded to include additional land areas that were not part of the original scope of the EA.

This letter is to inform you that the above-referenced property is now included as part of the project area being studied. Within the next several months the Rhode Island Department of Transportation will complete a re-evaluation of the aforementioned EA. Upon completion of this re-evaluation, the RIDOT Intermodal Transportation Planning office will begin design work. When complete, the right of way plans will be forwarded to the RIDOT Real Estate Section. These plans will identify all of the properties impacted the project. As a property owner or tenant you need to be informed of the acquisition process and your rights in the event the property is acquired and/or you need to be relocated.

With respect to the acquisition process, the property is appraised by a highly qualified staff or fee appraiser. The appraiser will contact you and afford you the opportunity to accompany them as they estimate the market value of your property. The appraisal is then reviewed by a second appraiser to ensure consistency and conformance with State and Federal laws. A member of our Real Estate staff will meet with you and present the Offer of Just Compensation. The staff will also will meet with you or your tenants, if applicable, to discuss relocation assistance and benefits. It is important for you to you understand that in order to qualify for relocation assistance and benefits, you must remain in your present location until a representative of the Real Estate Section, contacts you.

Wickford Junction

Page 2

Representatives from Real Estate are available to update you on the status of the project and to address any concerns you may have in the interim. If you have any immediate questions regarding this matter, please call Richard Kalunian at 222-2411 extension 4534 or me at extension 4510. RIDOT is committed to making sure that all people impacted by this project are treated in a fair and equitable manner.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Daniel Clarke".

Daniel Clarke  
Real Estate Section

Cc D.Sasso, W. McCarthy, R.Kalunian, M. Bennett, S. Devine



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Department of Transportation  
Real Estate  
Two Capitol Hill, Room 317  
Providence, RI 02903-1124

OFFICE (401) 222-2411  
FAX (401) 222-1212  
TDD (401) 222-4971

March 9, 2005

Joanne C. Corey  
981 Ten Rod Road  
N. Kingstown, RI 02852

Dear Ms. Corey:

Subject: Wickford Junction Train Station, North Kingstown

As you may be aware, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation is working with the Federal Transit Administration to extend commuter rail service from Providence to Wickford. An Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project was originally undertaken in February 2003 and a Finding Of No Significant Impact was issued on February 6, 2003. Since then the project area has been expanded to include additional land areas that were not part of the original scope of the EA.

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Wickford Junction

Page 2

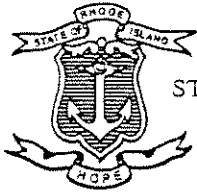
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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan Clarke".

Daniel Clarke  
Real Estate Section

Cc D.Sasso, W. McCarthy, R.Kalunian, M. Bennett, S. Devine



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Department of Transportation  
Real Estate  
Two Capitol Hill, Room 317  
Providence, RI 02903-1124

OFFICE (401) 222-2411  
FAX (401) 222-1212  
TDD (401) 222-4971

March 9, 2005

Letty I. Mills & Michael Gudeczaukas  
29 Periwinkle Rd.  
Narragansett, RI 02882

Dear Letty and Michael:

Subject: Wickford Junction Train Station, North Kingstown – Plat 112 Parcel 17

As you may be aware, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation is working with the Federal Transit Administration to extend commuter rail service from Providence to Wickford. An Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project was originally undertaken in February 2003 and a Finding Of No Significant Impact was issued on February 6, 2003. Since then the project area has been expanded to include additional land areas that were not part of the original scope of the EA.

This letter is to inform you that the above-referenced property is now included as part of the project area being studied. Within the next several months the Rhode Island Department of Transportation will complete a re-evaluation of the aforementioned EA. Upon completion of this re-evaluation, the RIDOT Intermodal Transportation Planning office will begin design work. When complete, the right of way plans will be forwarded to the RIDOT Real Estate Section. These plans will identify all of the properties impacted the project. As a property owner or tenant you need to be informed of the acquisition process and your rights in the event the property is acquired and/or you need to be relocated

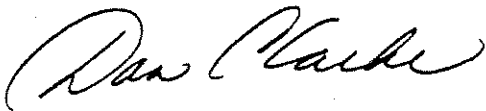
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Wickford Junction

Page 2

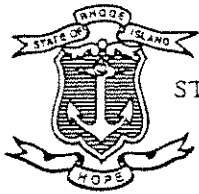
Representatives from Real Estate are available to update you on the status of the project and to address any concerns you may have in the interim. If you have any immediate questions regarding this matter, please call Richard Kalunian at 222-2411 extension 4534 or me at extension 4510. RIDOT is committed to making sure that all people impacted by this project are treated in a fair and equitable manner.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan Clarke".

Daniel Clarke  
Real Estate Section

Cc D.Sasso, W. McCarthy, R.Kalunian, M. Bennett, S. Devine



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Department of Transportation  
Real Estate  
Two Capitol Hill, Room 317  
Providence, RI 02903-1124

OFFICE (401) 222-2411  
FAX (401) 222-1212  
TDD (401) 222-4971

March 9, 2005

William R. Bassett  
63 Barcolay Rd.  
N. Kingstown, RI 02852

Dear Letty and Michael:

Subject: Wickford Junction Train Station, North Kingstown – Plat 112 Parcel 20

As you may be aware, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation is working with the Federal Transit Administration to extend commuter rail service from Providence to Wickford. An Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project was originally undertaken in February 2003 and a Finding Of No Significant Impact was issued on February 6, 2003. Since then the project area has been expanded to include additional land areas that were not part of the original scope of the EA.

This letter is to inform you that the above-referenced property is now included as part of the project area being studied. Within the next several months the Rhode Island Department of Transportation will complete a re-evaluation of the aforementioned EA. Upon completion of this re-evaluation, the RIDOT Intermodal Transportation Planning office will begin design work. When complete, the right of way plans will be forwarded to the RIDOT Real Estate Section. These plans will identify all of the properties impacted the project. As a property owner or tenant you need to be informed of the acquisition process and your rights in the event the property is acquired and/or you need to be relocated.

With respect to the acquisition process, the property is appraised by a highly qualified staff or fee appraiser. The appraiser will contact you and afford you the opportunity to accompany them as they estimate the market value of your property. The appraisal is then reviewed by a second appraiser to ensure consistency and conformance with State and Federal laws. A member of our Real Estate staff will meet with you and present the Offer of Just Compensation. The staff will also will meet with you or your tenants, if applicable, to discuss relocation assistance and benefits. It is important for you to you understand that in order to qualify for relocation assistance and benefits, you must remain in your present location until a representative of the Real Estate Section, contacts you.

Wickford Junction

Page 2

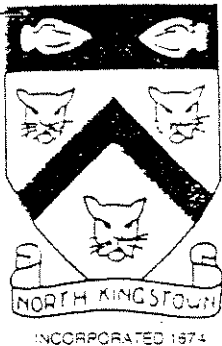
Representatives from Real Estate are available to update you on the status of the project and to address any concerns you may have in the interim. If you have any immediate questions regarding this matter, please call Richard Kalunian at 222-2411 extension 4534 or me at extension 4510. RIDOT is committed to making sure that all people impacted by this project are treated in a fair and equitable manner.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan Clarke".

Daniel Clarke  
Real Estate Section

Cc D.Sasso, W. McCarthy, R.Kalunian, M. Bennett, S. Devine



TOWN OF

# NORTH KINGSTOWN, RHODE ISLAND

30 BOSTON NECK ROAD  
NORTH KINGSTOWN, R.I. 02852-5762  
PHONE: (401) 294-3331  
FAX: (401) 885-7373

January 8, 2004

Mr. Michael Bennett, PE, Deputy Chief Engineer  
RIDOT Division of Intermodal Planning  
Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903-1124

RE: Wickford Junction Commuter Rail Station

Dear Mr. Bennett:

This letter is intended to provide some follow-up to the Town Council work session held in November with Robert Cioe, the developer of the Wickford Junction commercial plaza. After the meeting a news media article seemed to suggest the Town Council was opposed to the parking garage that is needed to support the commuter rail station. This is not the case.

Through the Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared for the rail station, the Town was aware of the expected 4-story 1000-car garage. We understand that two of those stories will be below grade. We also understand in the future if the commuter rail is successful, additional parking may be needed. We understand that such would be discussed with the Town when it is appropriate. We also understand that as a component of the commuter rail station development, the residential properties that front on Ten Rod Road may need to be acquired.

The concept of commuter rail at Wickford Junction continues to enjoy support in the community. The work session discussion focused on Mr. Cioe's presentation of a 6-story 2000-car parking facility which Town Council members were concerned would be urban in scale and out of character with the area.

We look forward to working with the RIDOT and Mr. Cioe in the development of the commuter rail facility. If you have any questions about the above or need more information, please feel free to contact Planning Director Marilyn Cohen or myself at 294-3331, Ext. 310 or 200 respectively.

Sincerely,

Rich Kerbel  
Town Manager

Cc: North Kingstown Town Council  
Marilyn F. Cohen, Director of Planning  
Robert Cioe, Wickford Junction

JAN 16 2004

# ATTACHMENT 3

## Wetland & Sole Source Aquifer Correspondence



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 1  
1 CONGRESS STREET, SUITE 1100  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02114-2023

June 16, 2005

Mr. Eric Johnstone  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RI DOT)  
Environmental and Intermodal Planning  
Two Capitol Hill, Room 372  
Providence, RI 02903-1124

Dear Mr. Johnstone,

This letter is in regards to EPA's 'sole source aquifer' review and determination of RI DOT's proposed development of rail facilities at Wickford Junction, North Kingstown, particularly with respect to Wickford Junction land acquisition, rail station, and 'reversal' side track. EPA's sole source aquifer review is authorized under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Over several phone calls and e-mail notes in the past two weeks, we have discussed several aspects of the proposed Wickford Junction Commuter Rail facilities in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. These issues arose when we were reviewing RI DOT's proposed property acquisition for EPA's 'sole source aquifer' determination. The review prompted our discussion with you on the proposed train station and the side 'reversal' track, whose potential sole source aquifers impacts were not specifically covered previously in RI DOT's Environmental Assessment issued in January 2003 (South County Commuter Rail, Environmental Assessment), and consequently were not included in our last review of the project or covered in our comment letter of March 20, 2003 (Mr. Doyle, Regional Administrator, Federal Transit Administration, 55 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02142-1093, and Mr. James Capaldi, Director, Rhode Island Department of Transportation, State Office Building, 2 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02903). Our discussions specifically involved the following:

- train station wastewater treatment,
- reversal side rail and its potential use as a lay-over area for engines parked overnight or weekends.

Our discussions on June 14, were very helpful in addressing these points. With your further description of the project and our re-assessment of a previously received site plan, EPA now understands that wastewater from the station will be connected to the wastewater treatment system on the north-western edge of the site and is currently serving



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 1  
1 CONGRESS STREET, SUITE 1100  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02114-2023

May 16, 2005

Edward Szymanski  
Associate Chief Engineer  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
Office of Environmental and Intermodal Planning  
2 Capitol Hill, Rhode Island 02903-1124

Dear Mr. Szymanski:

This is a follow up letter to confirm the telephone conversation we had regarding the South County Commuter Rail Project for the Town of North Kingston, Rhode Island. You wanted to know if there would be any adverse effects to wetlands associated with the project. There are no wetlands associated with the project. Hence, there will be no adverse construction effects to wetlands.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (617) 918-1397.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Melvin Peter Holmes", is written over a horizontal line.

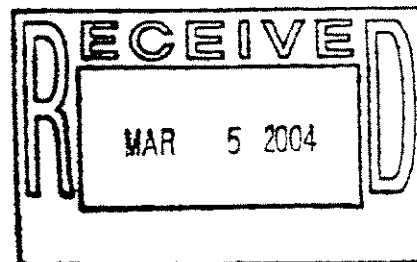
Melvin Peter Holmes, Biologist  
Wetlands Protection Section

cc: Eric Johnstone, RIDOT, (401) 222-2023



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
ENVIRONMENTAL & INTERMODAL PLANNING  
Two Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02903-1124  
ENVIRONMENTAL PHONE (401) 222-2023  
INTERMODAL PHONE (401) 222-4203  
FAX (401) 222-2207 TDD (401) 222-4971



March 5, 2004

Ms. Lois Adams  
United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Rhode Island Program Office  
Office of Ecosystem Protection  
1 Congress Street, Suite 1100  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114-2023

RE: South County Commuter Rail Project  
Reevaluation of the February 2003 Environmental Assessment  
Wickford Junction Train Station  
North Kingstown, Rhode Island

Dear Ms. Adams:

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is submitting the enclosed copy of the draft South County Commuter Rail Environmental Assessment Reevaluation (EA Reevaluation). This EA Reevaluation is being conducted in response to a minor change in the scope of project, which includes the acquisition of five parcels adjacent to the Wickford Junction Train Station. The change is proposed in order to accommodate the design of the facility. The EA Reevaluation states that the acquisition of the additional properties will have no significant adverse impacts on the environment in the vicinity of the Wickford Junction Train Station site. With specific respect to water quality issues detailed in the original EA, there are no anticipated changes.

This project is located within the Hunt/Annaquatucket/Pettaquamscutt Sole Source Aquifer (SSA). Your office previously issued a letter on March 20, 2003, stating that the EPA had concluded that the project does not pose a threat to water quality within the SSA. At this time RIDOT is requesting an updated concurrence from your office, based on the EA Reevaluation, with respect to SSA issues pertaining to project.

A reply at your earliest convenience would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact me or Mr. Erik Johnstone, RIDOT Environmental Scientist, at (401) 222-2023, extension 4253 or 4289, respectively.

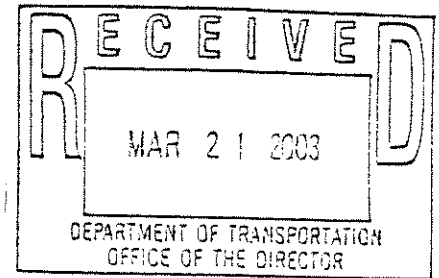
Sincerely,

Edward S. Szymanski, P.E.  
Associate Chief Engineer  
Office of Environmental Programs

Enclosures



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 1  
1 CONGRESS STREET, SUITE 1100  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02114-2023



March 20 2003

Mr. Richard H. Doyle  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration  
55 Broadway  
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093

Mr. James Capaldi  
Director  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
State Office Building  
2 Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903-1111

Dear Mr. Doyle and Mr. Capaldi:

This letter provides you with EPA's Sole Source Aquifer determination for the proposed Rhode Island Department of Transportation's South County Commuter Rail project, seeking federal financial assistance from the Federal Transit Administration.

Our concern and jurisdiction is to determine whether the construction and operation of the proposed facility could contaminate the ground water aquifer and cause harm to users relying on it for drinking water. We reviewed the scope of the project, its key features and other information presented in the 'South County Commuter Rail Environmental Assessment' (RI Department of Transportation / Federal Transit Administration). We also reviewed plan drawings submitted to North Kingstown by the developer for Wickford Junction, and conducted a field review of the project area with Mr. Jim Gordon of Federal Transit Administration, and Ms. Susan Licardi and Ms. Marilyn Cohen of North Kingstown's water department and planning department, respectively.

EPA's principal concern was the operation of an existing detention basin that would receive stormwater from the proposed parking facility. How the basin was designed to operate is significant in the potential for groundwater being affected. Three detention basins already exist at Wickford Junction to handle stormwater flow generated from three sets of retail stores which already occupy approximately 65 percent of the site. We examined the potential for stormwater contaminants or accidental spills to infiltrate through the detention basin into shallow groundwater which might be withdrawn for drinking water and we inquired whether groundwater in the area would likely to be used for drinking water. We had expected that a RI Department of

Environmental Management or Department of Transportation representative familiar with the design of the basins would join us for the site visit, but apparently was not able to attend.

From the Environmental Assessment we just received from FTA, and the Wickford Junction plans just received from North Kingstown's planning department, the eastern most existing detention basin will be used to receive stormwater flow from the proposed railway parking area. According to the plans, the eastern detention basin is 'lined,' and evident by the standing water and ice in the basin during our field visit, all stormwater collected in the basin would either evaporate or discharge over a spillway after significant precipitation events. The spillway of the eastern detention basin was constructed to discharge and disperse, or spread out, the flow over the natural wooded terrain of the hillside, and down the slope to join with slow northerly flowing water in the wooded swamp at the foot of the rail-line embankment. The lined detention basin, if constructed according to the plan we received from North Kingstown, should not permit infiltration and should restrict contaminants from affecting ground water quality.

Regarding use of groundwater at or near Wickford Junction, area residents and businesses are obtaining water from North Kingstown's municipal public water supply system (PWSS). Ms. Licardi indicated that North Kingstown's water department is not aware of any private well use in the area and there is little likelihood for new residential or commercial developments being built without water service from the municipal public water system. Together, we reviewed a map of North Kingstown's 'community' PWSS wells and wellhead protection areas and it showed none are in close proximity of the proposed rail parking facility.

There is, of course, the potential for residents or businesses to install their own private wells. Such wells are often drilled into bedrock, substantially below the surface discharges of the existing eastern detention basin that will collect stormwater from the proposed parking surfaces. Residential or commercial development in the surrounding area is unlikely to use private wells for their drinking water, particularly if there was a potential threat of contamination from existing land uses, including stormwater detention basins for example.

The largest open space area around the proposed parking facility lies to the east of the railway embankment (on the opposite side of the tracks from proposed parking facility) and is a State park that will remain undeveloped. To the west is the Wickford Junction shopping center and beyond it is other commercial and recreational development, and RI's Route 4 highway. To the north, beyond the shopping center, there is some development potential, but, with water service already in the area, it is highly unlikely that private wells would be developed for drinking water purposes. If I understood correctly, the North Kingstown water department indicated there may also be some interest for public water supply development to the north beyond the Wal-Mart store. It is uncertain now whether the town will pursue a new supply in that location. Also, there is an existing detention basin behind Wal-Mart between such a well and the proposed parking facility. The situation is similar to the south of the site, over Ten Rod Road, Route 102. Existing homes are on the municipal system and any new use would be from the municipal system, and there is already the existing detention basin - the eastern basin - which was built to handle and contain the additional stormwater from the proposed railway parking facility. Because this detention basin is lined, stormwater will not infiltrate to groundwater and all discharges have to

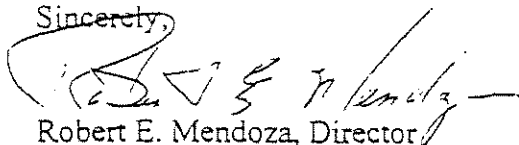
occur over the discharge spillway, where they are released to the hillside slope just above the wooded swamp, where it joins with surface water flowing north away from the Route 102 area.

Because the wooded swamp is generally an area of groundwater discharge, it is not an infiltration area where contaminants would reach groundwater. Unless there were a significant withdrawal of a public water supply well in close proximity to the detention basin to pull in surface water or draw down groundwater, contaminants (not already removed by natural filtration or adsorption) would not infiltrate to affect the aquifer's water quality. There will be substantial opportunity for detention basin discharges to interact with the ground surface and woody vegetation to infiltrate stormwater and filter contaminants as stormwater makes its way to the wetlands below.

We believe there is little threat that stormwater from the additional parking facilities proposed for Wickford Junction would contaminate groundwater and harm drinking water users in North Kingstown. There is one concern I draw to your attention. The hillside below the spillway of the eastern detention basin is beginning to show some erosion and should be further protected to stabilize the area from long-term erosion. Protecting this area should be an element of the proposed project, especially with the additional stormwater that would be generated by the new parking for railway use and by the additional stores to be built in the next stage of development at Wickford Junction. We suggest RIDOT work with Wickford Junction developer/owners to improve the protection of the hillside to avoid long-term erosion.

Thank you for contacting my office for sole source aquifer consultation on this project. If you have any questions or wish to further discuss this project with us, please feel free to contact me at (617) 918-1591, or Rob Adler of my staff at (617) 918-1396.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Mendoza, Director  
Rhode Island Program Office  
Office of Ecosystem Protection

cc.

William Gordon, FTA, US DOT, (william.gordon@fta.dot.gov)  
Peggy Foley, FTA, US DOT, (peggy.foley@fta.dot.gov)  
Edward Syzmanski, RIDOT  
Susan Licardi, Town of North Kingstown  
Marilyn Cohen, Town of North Kingstown  
Robert Adler, EPA